TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IN QUA IBOE

A MISSIONARY EFFORT IN NIGERIA

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IN QUA IBOE.

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Mr. S. A. Bill

Taken in front of old Ju-Ju tree at Ibune, 1906.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IN QUA IBOE.

The Story of A Missionary Effort in Nigeria.

BY

ROBERT L. M'KEOWN,

AUTHOR OF

"In the Land of the Oil Rivers."

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FOREWORD.

THE first history of the work in Qua Iboe, compiled by Mr. Robert M'Cann, was printed as a small booklet early in 1891. A second and larger edition appeared about five years later. The book, entitled, "IN THE LAND OF THE OIL RIVERS" —of which over 5,000 copies were sold—published in 1902, contained a more comprehensive account of the country, and a greatly extended narrative of the Mission.

We have now reached the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mr. Bill's first sailing, for West Africa, and it is felt that the time is opportune for the issue of a fresh record. The reception accorded to "THE LAND OF THE OIL RIVERS," encourages us to believe that the new book will have a wide circle of sympathetic readers.

"IN THE LAND OF THE OIL RIVERS" was the means of enlisting the co-operation of many new friends. It came into the hands of one person who was led to render very considerable help. His assistance, with that of others, imparted a

definite impulse to the progress of the Mission. It contributed towards the extension of the past few years, and the provision of suitable houses, so essential to the health of white missionaries in the climate of Southern Nigeria.

In the present volume it has been the object of the writer to exhibit a picture of the work, as it is, around each of the six central stations. At the three older centres, more especially at Ibuno, a stage in the evolution of the native Church has been reached, which called for somewhat detailed treatment. It thus became necessary to devote more space to the labours of the earlier missionaries, than to those of the younger men.

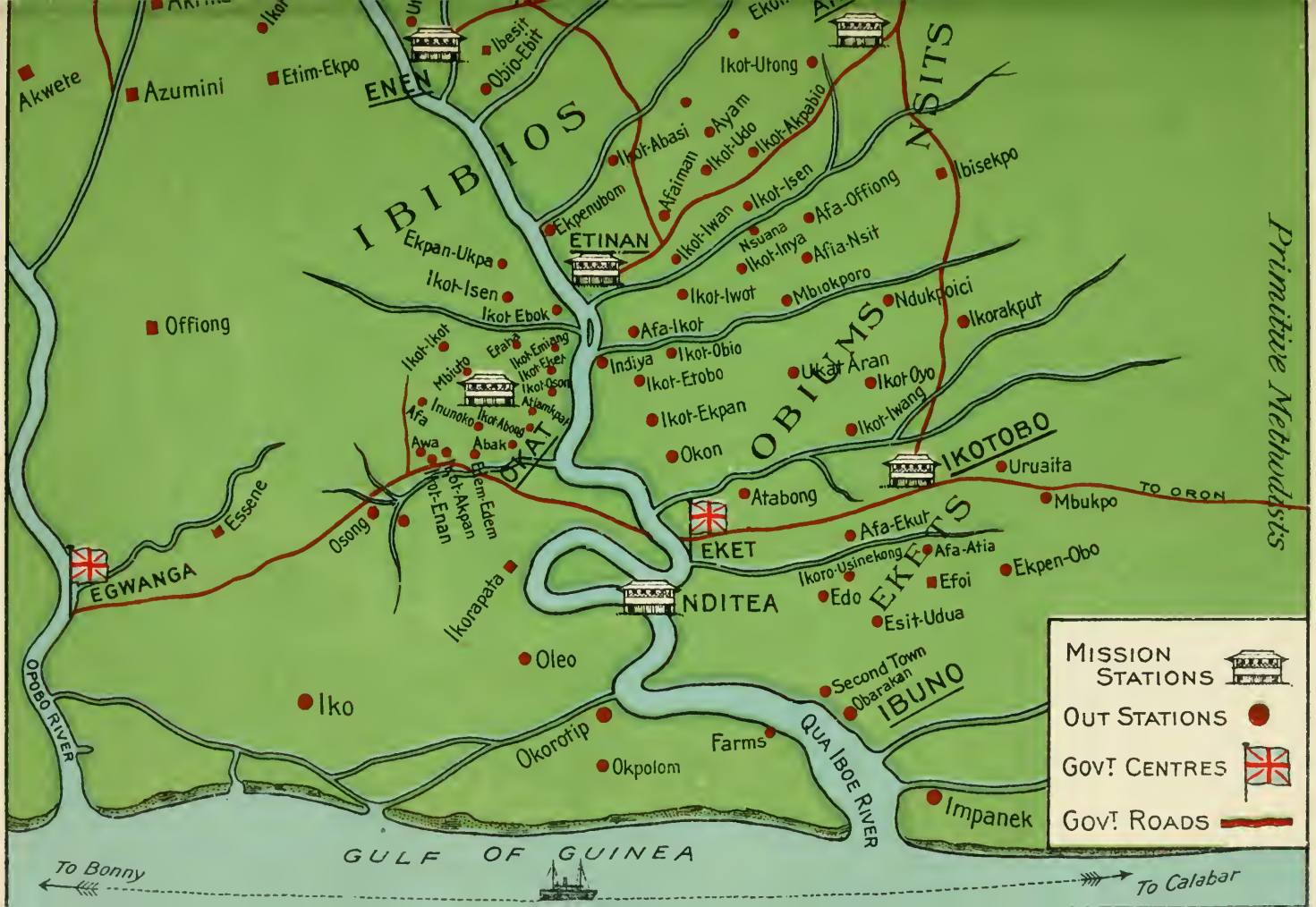
We have sought to convey some impression of the changing conditions that meet us all over the country, but we have felt how inadequate are our words to bring home to the heart of the reader the eager solicitude of the young, and the exceeding need of all, for the Gospel of Christ. The intense and widely expressed desire for the Light, and the self-denying efforts of the native Christians—the "doers of God's fashion"—to share their blessings with others, should bring great encouragement to all who have given and suffered for the evangelization of Qua Iboe.

It has not been possible to make anything beyond a passing reference to the work at home, where the development of interest has kept such steady pace with the expansion on the field. Notwithstanding the increasing expenditure of recent years, the Mission has never been involved in a single shilling of debt.

We have failed in this story, if pre-eminence has not been given to the unchanging faithfulness of God, and the effectual power of prayer in all the operations of these twenty-five years. May our experience of both lead us forward to the waiting fields, with the assurance that His presence will not fail us, till the appointed tasks are finished!

BELFAST,
1st October, 1912.

Church Missionary Society.
United Free Church
UNGWA
AROS
OKONIS
Osusa
BENDI
TO UDI
Erriam
Aro-Chuku
Use
IKOTEKPENE
ABA
ITU
CROSS RIVER
Ibiono
Ikot-Akpa
Ibiaku-Itam
Ndut
QUA IBOE



Primitive Methodists
Akwete
Azumini
Etim-Ekpo
ENEN
Ibesit
Obio-Ebit
IBIBIOS
Ikot-Utong
Ikot-Abasi
Ayam
Ikot-Udo
Ikot-Akpabio
Afaiman
Ekpenubom
ETINAN
Ikot-Isen
Ikot-Iwan
Nsuana
Afa-Offiong
Ikot-Inya
Afia-Nsit
Ibisekpo
Ekpan-Ukpa
Ikot-Isen
Ikot Ebok
Ikot-Iwot
Mbiokporo
Ndukpoici
Ikorakput
Offiong
Afa-Ikot
Indiya
Ikot-Obio
Ikot-Etobo
Ukat Aran
Ikot-Oyo
Ikot-Ekpan
Ikot-Iwang
OBIUMS
Ikot-Ikot
Efaha
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Ikot-Eket
Mbiuto
Ikot-Oson
Atiamkpat
Inunoko
Ikot-Abong
Afa
Awa
Abak
OKAT
Ikot-Enan
Ikot-Akpan
Edem-Edem
Essene
Osong
EGWANGA
Ikorapata
Oleo
Iko
OPOBO RIVER
Okorotip
Okpolom
Farms
QUA IBOE RIVER
Impanek
Atabong
EKET
NDITEA
IKOTOBO
Uruaita
TO ORON
Mbukpo
Afa-Ekut
Afa-Atia
Ikoro-Usinekong
Edo
Efoi
Ekpen-Obo
Esit-Udua
EKETS
Second Town
Obarakan
IBUNO
GULF OF GUINEA
To Bonny
To Calabar
MISSION STATIONS
OUT STATIONS
GOVT. CENTRES
GOVT. ROADS

Twenty-Five Years in Qua Iboe.

CHAPTER I.

On the Way Out.

Beware, oh, beware of the Bight of Benin,
Where few may come out, though many go in.

For over four hundred years many circumstances combined to give the West Coast of Africa a dubious reputation. The horrors of the slave trade, the deadliness of the climate, and the cruel customs of its inhabitants, together with the legends of the unknown and mysterious interior, have produced a feeling of fear, associated with a strange fascination in the minds of civilized people. This feeling appealed to the adventurous spirits of Europe from the time of Vasco de Gama till the final secrets of the Coast were yielded at the beginning of this century.

The past ten years have witnessed the death of the old reputation. The waters of the Coast have become an ocean highway, with mail steamers, fitted with wireless telegraphy, calling at every port. No fewer than twenty railways now pierce the Continent for varying and increasing

distances. The hinterland has been fully explored, and with the exception of Liberia, partitioned among the European powers.

Whilst a political map of West Africa from the Senegal to the Congo resembles a patchwork quilt, the possessions of all other European countries are bounded and surrounded by those of France.

If we imagine a man's hand laid on North-west Africa, with the outspread fingers towards the Atlantic, we shall gain an idea of the French Colonies. Algeria represents the wrist, Sahara the palm, the little finger lies on Senegambia, and the thumb, now partially amputated, on Gaboon and the French Congo.

The spaces between the fingers are mainly filled with the four British possessions, all gained and approached from the sea, and increasing in size and importance from Gambia to Nigeria, which, with the German Cameroons, lies between the Congo and Dahomey—the thumb and first finger of the French hand.

As was indicated at the World Missionary Conference, these French Colonies, having an estimated population of twenty millions, are the most spiritually destitute countries in the world. With the exception of Gaboon, scarcely any Protestant missionaries are at work in French Africa. Commerce has advanced inland. Islam has marched southward. But the few Christian

Missions near the coast have completely failed to penetrate the interior.

Sailing from Liverpool we reach Qua Iboe,* in Southern Nigeria, by one of Elder Dempster's steamers in about twenty days. The first stage of the voyage, including the stormy Bay of Biscay, occupies less than a week, and brings us to the beautiful Canary Islands. Nearly another week is spent between the Islands and Sierra Leone. This is the most pleasant part of the journey. The sea is usually tranquil, and the increasing warmth is welcomed by those who have previously resided down the Coast.

After leaving Grand Canary, the steamer and passengers prepare themselves for the rise in temperature that takes place with every day's southward sail. Double awnings are fixed on the decks, and the electric fans in every cabin, if powerless to cool the air, keep it in motion, whilst heavy clothing is exchanged for garments lighter in colour and texture.

The sun, especially in the early months of the year, mounts rapidly towards the zenith every day, until its noontide rays become perpendicular, and each night discloses stars unknown in our Northern latitudes.

The pioneers of Empire are well represented on board, and until quite recently few, except

* Pronounced *Kwa-eebo;* on some maps spelt Kwa-Ibo. Properly speaking, the name does not apply to the country, but only to the river entering the Gulf of Guinea between Opobo and Calabar.

Government officials, traders and missionaries, were to be found on the West Coast boats. Now there are prospectors, mining engineers, railway men, experts of various kinds, and even tourists and journalists on the passenger list.

There is not nearly so much drinking as in the old " Coast " days, but the love of gambling seems to grow with the heat. The day is too short for the demands of this passion, and it is pursued till night passes into morning. During the early part of the voyage the passengers form into groups. These are gradually broken up, and by the time the vessel enters the Gulf of Guinea, only the remnants of each are found on board. The failure of these to assimilate renders the concluding stages of the passage less agreeable, and all are anxious to reach their respective destinations.

The approach to Freetown, Sierra Leone, is very inviting. It boasts the only harbour on the Coast, and the town shines out from an imposing background of palm-clad hills. It contains nearly 40,000 people, speaking, it is said, forty different languages. The Colony is larger than Scotland, with less than one-fourth the population.

For two or three days after leaving Freetown, the steamer's head gradually turns eastward, and we reach Liberia, founded by Americans—in the same way as Sierra Leone by the British—as a home for freed slaves. The population consists

of their descendants and native negroes—the famous Kroo-men. In everything but the colour of the skin, there is a vast contrast between the

The Grasping Hand of Colonial France.

two races. The gentlemen from the new world are the ruling class, and govern the country about as badly as their friends in Hayti. They are an

idle, over-dressed, and bejewelled lot. The native Kroo-men are the exact reverse. Their naked bodies reveal splendid physique, and they are good-humoured, simple, and hard-working.

Nearly every outward steamer calls off Liberia to embark a number of Kroo-boys, who accompany the white man all over the Coast, and engage in every form of manual labour. They generally work for a year, and then "sit for their country" until their money is done, when they again hie themselves forth in quest of employment.

We anchor far out in the dull grey of the dawning day. The steamer's siren is sounded, and the sea immediately becomes dotted with little canoes, which appear and disappear with every heave of the Atlantic swell. They are soon alongside, and with athletic action their occupants quickly climb aboard, each with a small box poised on his head or shoulder. There is no ceremony, and but little demonstration of farewell, as the old father or young brother turns his canoe, and paddles for the shore.

Kroo-boys are almost amphibious, and are indispensable for the working and landing of heavy cargo through the dreaded surf on the harbourless West Coast. They keep light-hearted and good-natured in spite of their perilous life and the rough treatment which they too frequently receive from Europeans.

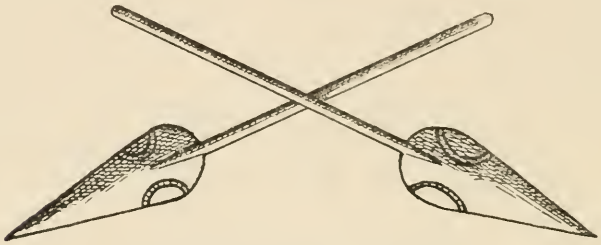
Coming up the Coast on one occasion we had

many Kroo-men returning after their term of service. Their friends failed to have sufficient canoes out to meet the steamer. They were all filled, and we had still some of the Kroo-boys on board. The vessel could not wait, and rather than get carried on to Sierra Leone they plunged into the shark-infested sea, where we left them, shouting and swimming about until the canoes returned. In this way some of them lost the whole of their little possessions, as they could not possibly preserve the precious contents of their tiny boxes from the salt water.

Few Europeans are acquainted with their language, and they converse in a kind of "pidgin" English. Some of them know but little, even of this, and few words go very far. The effect of the African idiom on the English is often startling. "I done find him, but I no fit look him," means—"I have searched for the thing but cannot find it"; and "I done look them white massa, he live for die," is their way of saying—"I have just seen our white master, and he is dying."

Few vessels beyond the regular liners, and an occasional coal-laden tramp are seen. Here and there a solitary barque, manned by bearded Scandinavians, the descendants of the hardy Norsemen who, it is said, were the first Europeans to venture south of the Canaries, is slowly discharging casks of kerosene into surf boats.

Many miles of the Ivory Coast, the tip of the French second finger, are passed before we come to the British Gold Coast, calling at the ancient ports of Elmina, Cape Coast Castle, Accra, and the modern Secondee. The appearance of the steamer at each is the signal for a regular flotilla



Qua Iboe (Ibuno) Paddles

of surf boats, propelled by dusky paddlers, with here and there a white man framed in their midst

The paddlers sit along each gunwale. They raise their trident paddles, and strike the water as one man, to the incessant accompaniment of a curious hissing chant. The effect is very peculiar. At a distance the boat resembles some large insect, with a number of black lateral claws which rise and fall, as it comes rapidly over the water. There is always great rivalry as to which boat can reach the ship first, while noisy torrents of sarcasm, in Babel tones, are poured on the late arrivals.

The forts on the Gold Coast stand so close to

the sea, as to be sprayed with the surf, which rises into columns twenty feet high, and breaks in long level lines against the sandy shore. These old forts must have been strongly built to have endured so long in the all-consuming climate. Their bare, white walls gleam out of the dark and embracing foliage, seeming to frown on the flimsy modern bungalows that thrust their tin roofs through the palms.

Passing French Dahomey and German Togoland, our steamer anchors off Lagos, the capital of Southern Nigeria, and the most important trade centre in British West Africa. Lagos has a population of nearly 80,000, and is rapidly increasing. The town is built on the inner side of a tongue of land, between a low lagoon and the sea. Infinite labour, joined to great cost, is overcoming the obstacles presented by a shifting bar and a shallow harbour. A great mole is being constructed, and we now hear of a 4,000 ton steamer entering the port.

Lagos is the terminus of the Southern Nigeria Government Railway running to the Niger *via* Ibadan, crossing the river at Jebba to Zunguru, the capital of Northern Nigeria, on to Kano, and some day to Lake Chad. The section from Zunguru to Kano was built "to the sound of the drum" * by native labour with great rapidity. It opens Northern Nigeria, and saves the tedious

* E. D. M. in "African Mail."

and trying voyage by the creeks and the Niger into the interior.

We are now approaching the old Guinea countries, the reservoirs whence the great black stream of slaves flowed, for so many years, to the new world. As we gaze on the hazy coast, our thoughts revert to its chequered history. Guarded by a fever-stricken climate, it long refused to be affected by contact with the white race. The Dutch were established on the Gold Coast early in the seventeenth century, but they made no impression on the country behind the range of their forts. The Portuguese conducted intermittent trade from Senegal to Angola since 1450. According to Sir Harry Johnston* they were at Benin in 1485. Yet that bloodstained kingdom became safe and settled only after the British expedition, following the massacre in 1897.

The same dug-outs, propelled by the same naked savages, living under unchanging customs, in the same style of hut, have sailed over the lagoons and creeks for the centuries during which the natives have been a prey to the tribes of the interior, and the spoil of Europeans, who have exploited their land. The wonderful vitality and buoyant spirit of the Negro have brought him through the whole dismal tragedy down to the latest and crowning horror of the Belgian Congo.

* "The Opening up of Africa."

"On him alone was the doom of pain,
From the morning of his birth;
On him alone the curse of Cain
Fell like a flail on the garnered grain,
And struck him to the earth."

Is it too much to hope that at least in British territory the night is finally gone, and that under enlightened and sympathetic rule the Negro will now have an opportunity of developing himself and his country? For a period of transition has arrived in earnest. The Missionary, the Government, and the Railway, in very diverse ways, are creating a new West Africa, making it difficult to write in the present tense of fashions that flourished ten years ago.

We sail on to Burutu, on the Forcados mouth of the Niger. Here in 1900 there was little but a vast wilderness of water, bush, and mud. Now extensive clearings have been made, custom house, post office, and official residences have literally *arisen*, whilst a native town has sprung up. A floating dock and engineering shops have been established for the numerous branch steamers ascending the Niger, and plying with cargo between this busy centre and Lagos.

The place is shut off from the sea by long arms of mangrove-covered swamp. Hence the ocean steamers discharge into the branch boats in fearful heat. In the dry season the sun shining down

on the endless swamps fills the palpitating atmosphere with suffocating vapour. In the wet season a moist mist, like some dark spirit, hangs over the whole region, obscuring the sky, and hiding the features of forest, mudbank, and river. For this is the Bight of Benin, and the Niger Delta—that vast labyrinth of rivers, creeks, lagoons, and islands—which no living man, white or black, fully knows.

We leave it with emotions of relief, call at the old slave port of Bonny, pass Qua Iboe our ultimate destination, and ascend the estuary formed by the Calabar and Cross Rivers. The steamer picks her way over the bar and up the tortuous waterway, until, rounding a bend, we suddenly sight the roofs of Duketown.

The native town lies between two hills, forming a high bank on our right. These hills are crowned with buildings belonging to the Government and the United Free Mission. Thus Calabar presents a fair appearance from the river, and the disenchantment on landing is not so complete compared with other West Coast towns. Broad avenues, shaded by the heavy-leaved mango-tree, well kept paths, beautiful park-like spaces, and receding bush, make Calabar a pleasant place to see. Telegraph, telephones, electric light, and a water supply cause us to doubt if this is really the *old* Calabar of West Africa, until we are recalled by the awful and all-pervading heat.

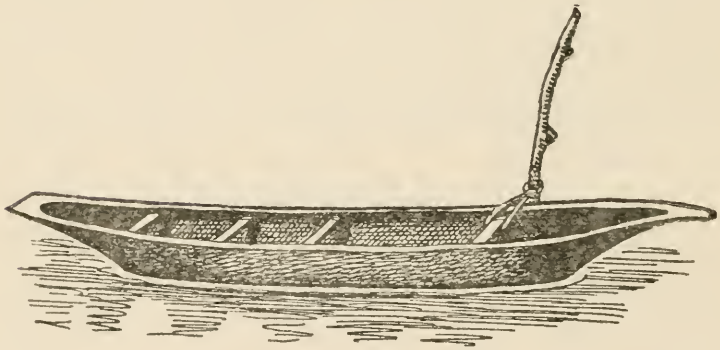
We transfer to the smaller Qua Iboe steamer, and retrace our way down the river, and back to sea. The waters have a silky, oily aspect. The mangrove, in long vistas, appears to stand clear out of the river on invisible supports. In the distance are fishing canoes, whose grass sails look so tall as to resemble schooners. All nature wears a dreamy and unreal appearance. We are glad to get the greeting of the evening breeze as we near the sea, over which hangs a dark and menacing tornado. Here and there the deep clouds part, or are broken in gaps, through which the setting sun casts most wonderful gold and copper-tinted shafts. Every moment the central gloom is lit up by lightning in great broad sheets, alternating with angry darts.

To the South, Fernando Po is dimly visible, and behind us in the east the lofty peak of the Cameroons wraps itself for the night in a heavy blanket of cloud. Away to the north-west stretches the long, low shore line dotted with shadowy bush, and between us and the phantom-looking coast, dance the breakers of Tom Shotts—sometimes appearing black and solid, and anon vanishing in flashes of white foam.

We cast anchor. The short twilight makes haste to depart. The strange lights in the west melt quickly away, and the moon rides out, flooding the phosphorescent sea with pools of light.

We are awakened next morning by the raising

of the anchor, and four hours' steam along the coast finds us abreast the mouth of the Qua Iboe River. We are soon rocking and tumbling on the bar, and after a few heart-searching minutes we enter the winding river, the gateway into our portion of dark and alluring Africa.



IBUNO FISHING CANOE.
The Trading Canoe is much larger.

Photo by Mr. Westgarth.]

GIRLS WITH WATER-POTS, GOVERNMENT ROAD NEAR AKA.

CHAPTER II.

In Qua Iboe Land.

Dim burns the boat lamp: shadows deepen round.
From giant trees with snake-like creepers wound,
And the black water glides without a sound.

For administrative purposes Northern and Southern Nigeria are now being united. Yet the physical features, and, to a lesser extent, the people of each colony are distinct.

Southern Nigeria is a very flat country. The steaming jungle and low bush near the coast yield to undulating forest bearing tracts in the interior. The Delta district is extremely marshy. The land scarcely rises above the level of high water, and tidal creeks form natural canals between the rivers flowing into the Gulf of Guinea. On the other hand Northern Nigeria is mainly a land of hills and valleys, of high tablelands and grassy plains.

The natives of the two Nigerias belong mostly to various branches of the Negro race; but the people in the South, failing to develop the idea of Government, have not united into powerful tribes under the central authority of single rulers like those of the North.

Southern Nigeria is over three times the size and has more than twice the population of Ireland. It is divided into Eastern, Central, and Western Provinces. The Eastern division, which includes Qua Iboe, contains a population estimated at three and a-half millions.

It is one of the best administered and most prosperous of African Colonies. Its exports and imports, which are almost equal, increased from £4,000,000 to £11,000,000 between 1904 and 1910. It owes its wealth to the abundance of palm trees, nourished by its hot and humid atmosphere, but trade in cocoa, cotton, palm-fibre, rubber, timber, and maize, is growing apace.

The Qua Iboe River has a contracted mouth, widening to 1,000 yards a few miles from the sea. To the east two broad and shallow creeks,* about a mile apart, open the country towards Calabar. A larger inlet constitutes a continuous waterway, with the Opobo and Bonny Rivers on the west. These creeks, as well as the main river, are edged with mangrove swamps, as far inland as the salt water is carried by the tide.

The mangrove tree has a short, twisted stem, with many coiling roots, and numerous suckers suspended like fishing rods over the water. The roots stand out of the mud, supporting the trunk and wavy branches, giving the appearance of a tree on stilts. As the suckers touch the water

* One of these, Stubbs' Creek, explored by Mr. Stubbs in 1909, after some clearing, allows the passage of a canoe right through to the Calabar estuary.

they part into fingers, which catch and detain floating matter. In this way the tree is a land builder, and much of the low-lying ground is apparently of recent formation.

There is very little swamp in Qua Iboe, except in the vicinity of these three creeks, and the narrow margin on each side of the river, extending as far as the tides a little above Etinan. The soil in this district is alluvial, and there is an absence of all rock.

The river is reported to have its source in a lake 200 miles from the coast, and its waters are quite different from those of other rivers in Southern Nigeria, being clear and free from mud, as if they had passed through a filter. Their volume decreases in the dry season, but the fall is nothing compared with that of the Cross River.

The largest true tributaries on the east are those from the Eket, Obium, and Nsit countries, but there are three others above Etinan ; whilst the only affluents on the west are the Awa and Ikotibok creeks.

A long island, wreathed with exuberant bush, divides the river near Indiya. Above this island it narrows to less than 100 yards, further decreasing near Enen to about 50, beyond which navigation is very difficult, owing to snags and the swift current. North of Ekpenubom the two shores are seldom swampy at the same point.

If there is swamp on one side, the other has a definite bank sloping to a hill.

The view from one of these hills is not extensive, and the river valley is traced with difficulty. The entire landscape is a panorama of creeper-clad bush, in which oil and wine palms predominate. Their feathery fronds impart the gray green hue, which is the colour note in the whole picture. In the dry season this prevailing shade is interrupted and enlivened by the strange whitish aspect of the cotton trees. Then these immense giants, which tower above the general sea of jungle, look as if covered with hoar frost.

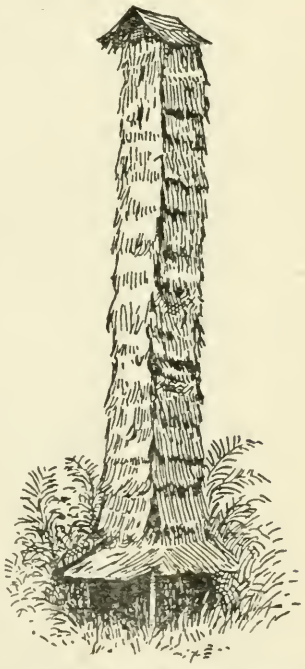
The forest impresses us with the infinite energy of nature. Clearings are quickly blotted out by new growth, and the eye seldom rests on an open space. There is no escape from the sensation of being encompassed and imprisoned by limitless and impenetrable bush. This is especially so at night, when the narrow native track is crossed with weird and uncertain shadows, as if the spirits of darkness had come to bar and dispute our way.

Ten years ago the river and its creeks were the only highways. Now, thanks to Sir W. Egerton,* many Government roads have been constructed. One runs roughly parallel to the sea for nearly sixty miles, from Egwanga (Opobo) to Oron, on the Calabar River. Another, over seventy miles long, has been made from Ikotobo, *via* Uyo, to

* Formerly High Commissioner of Southern Nigeria.

Ikotekpene, and from thence to Itu, on the Cross River. The telegraph wire is carried on steel standards along these two roads. The third connects Etinan with Uyo; and a fourth branches therefrom to Enen.

By filling swamps and bridging creeks, these roads are becoming suitable for cycling. They run in straight lines, robbing the bush of its mystery and terror. They open out long vistas, revealing stretches of country, such as the natives never saw before; and they are better than punitive expeditions for settling the country and keeping it peaceful.



Type of Memorial Buildings to the dead in the Anang country between Uyo and Enen.

After many tiresome journeys on the stifling creeks, one cannot fail to appreciate the utility of the roads. The absence of stones or even gravel for coating the surface is a great disadvantage, but the constant tread of the bare feet of many natives hardens a narrow track in the middle into condition for the bicycle.

Each town has to keep a section in repair, by cutting young bush, removing roots, and levelling up ruts washed out by the rain. A native inspector, under the local District Commissioner, has charge of several sections.

The road from Ikotobo to Ikotekpene traverses a very populous country. Forests of oil-palm and farms of yams and maize succeed one another all the way. North of Uyo the ground on the right is broken into gorges and valleys, watered by clear, cool streams.

From Ikotekpene the road ascends for many miles eastward, before dipping towards the valley of the Cross River, which it reaches at Itu, near the entrance to Enyong creek, issuing from Aro-chuki.

The United Free Mission station at Itu affords a fine prospect. The river is wide, with high and richly-wooded banks, and would convey the impression of a Highland loch, were it not for the riotous vegetation.

In the dry season a large patch of sand is exposed opposite the mouth of the muddy Enyong creek. Traders coming down the Cross River make their nightly abode on this sand to escape thieves on the shore, but the mosquitoes surely exact a heavy penalty.

From Ikotekpene to Bendi the country presents a rough and broken surface. The path frequently descends into deep valleys, where it hides itself under heavy foliage. Climbing out on the opposite side with the sun on one's back is a cruel experience.

Being only four degrees north of the equator, daylight and darkness are of equal duration

throughout the Qua Iboe year, and the twilight is exceedingly brief.

> "The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out,
> At one stride comes the dark."

The morning hour is the only cool portion of the day. The sun ascends at right angles to the horizon, and by nine o'clock the entire atmosphere is heated up. After that, and especially in the dry season, life for Europeans is a burden, and movement pain.

The heavy rainfall is confined to the wet season, from April till October. During the dry season there is scarcely a shower. The advent of both seasons is heralded by sudden tornadoes, accompanied by terrific thunderstorms. In July there is a period of sunless weather, without rain, known as the "small dries." After Christmas the Harmattan blows from the Sahara, causing a dense dry fog, which almost veils the sun, and irritates the skin, particularly about the eyes and lips. It continues a month, and is known as the "smokes."

The heat becomes more trying towards the end of the dry months. It is worst in the early afternoons, when there is but little breeze. All nature seems to feel it. The palms stand motionless, as if carved in the glowing atmosphere, the birds and insects become silent, and the natives say—"Them sun he strong too much."

This condition is relieved by the first tornadoes, which arrive early in March. The bright forenoon is succeeded by an unnatural stillness. The sky instantly becomes black. A slight breeze, amid crashing thunder, quickens into a rushing gale. Soon the impetuous roar of the big rain is heard across the forest. In a few minutes it is upon us. Falling in sheets, it is as quickly absorbed by the parched and porous earth. The sullen thunder gradually dies away, and we are left in assured possession of delightful coolness for the night.

The direct rays of the torrid sun raising the temperature give the atmosphere the greatest possible capacity for moisture, and at the same time draw vast quantities of vapour from river, swamp, and jungle. So that, even when it is not raining, everything feels damp to touch and smell, and in the afternoons a close and oppressive heat arises from the very earth.

This renders the West African climate more difficult to endure, and prepares the system for the poison of malaria, which few escape. In centres with a European community, it has been possible to have some sanitation, and to destroy the mosquito, always resulting in greater freedom from fever. But where the white man has to live in isolated places, obliged to expose himself at any hour of the day or night, the climate still asserts its old deadly character.

Deceived by the rich and varied vegetation which clothes the country like a robe of velvet, the newcomer often forms a favourable impression, and becomes careless of precautions with regard to personal health. This open invitation to malaria is not long neglected, and the fair mask is abruptly torn from the face of the country by the hand of fever.

The natives of Qua Iboe, like the Indians of America, believed that attacks of fever were caused by mosquitoes long before this was discovered by European investigators. When Mr. Bill first arrived, the Ibunos warned him that he would get fever if he allowed himself to be bitten by these pests.

The Qua Iboe people possess few animals. Cattle do not thrive, and are rarely kept. Goats are fairly common, but fowl are scarce. As the goats and cows are not domesticated, milk and butter are unknown.

Southern Nigeria seems to be the home of every insect that creeps on the earth, flies through the air, or lives in the water. In the daylight we see them marching in search of plunder, or mixing themselves with our food ; at night we hear their thousand noises from tree and undergrowth, and we feel and fear them all the time. Ants, mosquitoes, sandflies, jiggers, ticks, crickets, and many flies add their torments to the other trials of the climate.

I shall not forget my first introduction to the driver ants. I had just arrived in Africa, and, with Mr. Bailie, took a walk in beautiful moonlight between the Mission station and the native town at Okat. On the way back I must have trampled on a procession of drivers, for I suddenly felt as if a hundred needles were pricking at as many parts of my body. I could not imagine what was wrong, and on reaching the house lost no time in repairing to my room, where I picked off over sixty ants, biting so viciously, that many suffered themselves to be pulled in two rather than let go.

Some of the natives are fond of the flesh of a species of snake, making its abode in the trunk of a hollow tree. Having located the snake, they scoop up some drivers in a plantain-leaf, and shake them through a hole into the tree. In their rage they immediately attack the snake, which is compelled to glide into the open, where it meets its end from the blow of a stick.

What are known as white ants or termites are very common. They never expose themselves, but construct ant-hills, from which underground tunnels are pushed out. These ant-hills, filled with galleries, stand up from the earth like sharp rocks.

The termites live on wood, preferring the softer kinds. They make havoc of native dwellings. They attack our churches and bungalows. They

often construct ridges of clay, covering tube-like passages over the surface of posts, which they cannot bore, to gain access to softer wood. The old church at Ibuno is elevated on many hardwood piles, and it is the duty of the native sexton to frequently examine these, for the beginnings of the clay ridge. In spite of all vigilance however, the ants have found their way in, and the upper part of the building is now completely riddled.

Wild animals, except monkeys, snakes, and lizards, are seldom seen, though leopards, wild cat, deer, and elephant wander in the bush. Some of the natives are keen hunters, spending days in pursuit of game, assisted by little dogs trained to the chase, and dosed with a kind of medicine which is supposed to heighten their power of scent.

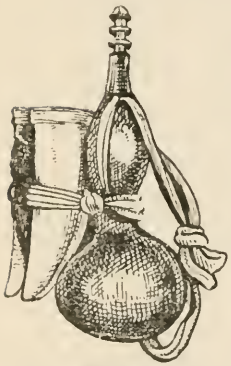
In the early days of the Mission, elephants frequently appeared in Ibuno, doing considerable damage to plantations. Mr. Bill and Mr. Bailie killed an elephant each, which the natives had been hunting.

The following extract from Mr. Bill's diary describes how he shot one in May, 1892 :—

" About 9-30 a.m. two men came from Asaqua, Impanek, to say that an elephant was close to the town, that they had shot at it, and could not kill it, and asking if I would come. I started at once, taking my Martini rifle and twenty cartridges. I

found it near a farm of yams and corn. The animal had left traces of himself in a house razed to the ground. The farm was full of men in a state of great excitement, with all kinds of fire-arms, from the snider down to the old flint-lock. Between this farm and the creek was a narrow strip of dense bush, into which the elephant had retreated.

"A few minutes after I arrived, he made a tremendous charge in the direction of where we were standing. We could just see his huge back above the bush, and hear the peculiar noise he was making. It sounded like a tremendous blowing of the nose. The sound of his charge was fear-inspiring, beyond anything I had ever experienced. Young trees were broken or brushed aside like grass, and his speed was such that no man in his track could escape. He was very angry, too, for they had been firing at him for two hours —mostly with slugs of various kinds. Those who had rifles did not know how to use them. They never put them to the eye, but just holding them out in their two hands, let fly.



Huntsman's Powder Horn and Mimbo Bottle.

"I entered the bit of bush, not without some trepidation. Two or three natives went with me, and I dodged the animal for half an hour, keeping about 20 yards away, and getting several

shots. When he charged, we ran ; and when he stopped, we did so too.

"In one of his charges my rifle, helmet and feet got entangled in the bush. I fell and could not get up, so crawled to one side, hoping he would not see me. He stopped, however, about ten yards away, and I crept out, got my rifle, and had four more shots at him before he charged again. He did not stand still all the time, but moved a little backwards or forwards as each bullet struck him. He then made for the edge of the creek, and I followed, still firing as I got the chance.

" When he reached the creek side, he fell, and I shouted—' Akpa ' (dead). The cry was taken up by the natives behind me, and by those on the farm. I rushed up close to where he had fallen, but it was only to see him rise again. I gave him two more shots, and he fell, this time to rise no more. In less than ten seconds he was surrounded by men with machetes, all eager to get as much of his flesh as they could. Asaqua made Egbo law, that no man should touch it, until they had decided what was to be done. The sign of this Egbo was a few palm leaves laid on the carcase. They might as well have put salt on it, for no one paid the slightest heed."*

After retiring to the ' palaver ' house, the chief men agreed to give Mr. Bill one of the tusks. It was five feet in length, five inches in diameter,

* This indicates that the Egbo Secret Society must have had little power in Impanek, as Egbo law when proclaimed (in native phraseology, " blown ") is scrupulously observed.

and weighed 45 lbs. The other tusk was placed in the Ju-Ju house. He left the natives like a swarm of bees over the elephant's body, shouting and cutting off the flesh.

Birds are not plentiful, the largest being the African vulture, a great scavenger, and sacred to Ju-Ju. The beautiful and wary white heron is occasionally seen, singly or in pairs, feeding on the mud-flats. The parrot, king-fisher, and horn-bill remain all the year, whilst the falcon-hawk and swallow are dry season visitors.

Native Hoe.

The hawks are very destructive, bold, and fierce. It takes a well-aimed shot to bring one down, and they are singularly tenacious of life. I have seen a wounded hawk strike its claws so deeply into a boy's foot, that its leg had to be cut off before the grip could be released.

The planting of the crops is done before the end of the dry season. Then all natives are busy cutting and burning bush, making clearings to receive the yams, which are placed in holes at regular intervals. The fleshy roots form slowly, and the vine-like climber ascends a tall pole. Great feasting and rejoicing mark the time when the first yams are taken out. The main crop is dug up in October and November. They are palatable and nutritious; and, cooked exactly like potatoes, are the staple food of the natives. They also cultivate cassava, Indian corn, plantains,

bananas, paw-paws, and pepper. Oranges, lemons, limes, mangoes, guavas, and pineapples have been introduced by Europeans, but the natives show little fondness for fruit.

There are not many flowering plants growing wild, and none are cultivated. With few exceptions the people show no interest in flowers.

The late Mr. Goldie relates that a Calabar chief finding him engaged in planting roses, inquired if they were good to eat. On hearing that they were not for food, but beautiful to the eye, he replied that he did not see the use of bringing bush into the country, as they had already more than they wanted.

By far the most important tree in Southern Nigeria is the palm, of which there are three varieties—the oil palm, the wine palm, and the cocoanut palm.

The oil palm grows to a great height, with a straight and bare stem. Its fronds are short, and it lacks the grace of the wine palm. Several spiky cone-shaped masses grow around the base of the fronds every year. These often weigh 50 lbs. each, and contain hundreds of yellowish red nuts, from which the valuable oil is obtained by crushing and boiling. The gathering of the nuts, the preparation of the oil, its carriage and sale employ many natives. The Western Province alone exported over 5,000,000 gallons of oil, together with nearly 70,000 tons of kernels

in 1909, and Southern Nigeria was long known as the "Oil Rivers."

The wine palm supplies the natives with refreshing drink* in many parts of the country where pure water is scarce. It is met with everywhere, but grows in greater abundance along the low-lying ground bordering the rivers.

The wine, known as mimbo, is simply the sap of the tree, obtained by cutting off the spike in which the trunk terminates. It oozes out at the rate of a gallon or two daily for a month. The residual juice is driven up by fire, and a supply of "smoked" (inferior) mimbo is drawn for a week or ten days longer, when the tree is exhausted and cut down. The trunk is divided into lengths, and the strong, tough fibre picked out by hand. This fibre (the piassava of commerce) is used chiefly for brushes.

The natives employ the stems of the frond as bamboos for the framework of the walls and roofs of their houses. The framework is tied together with the fibre, and the leaves, made into mats, are universally used for thatch.

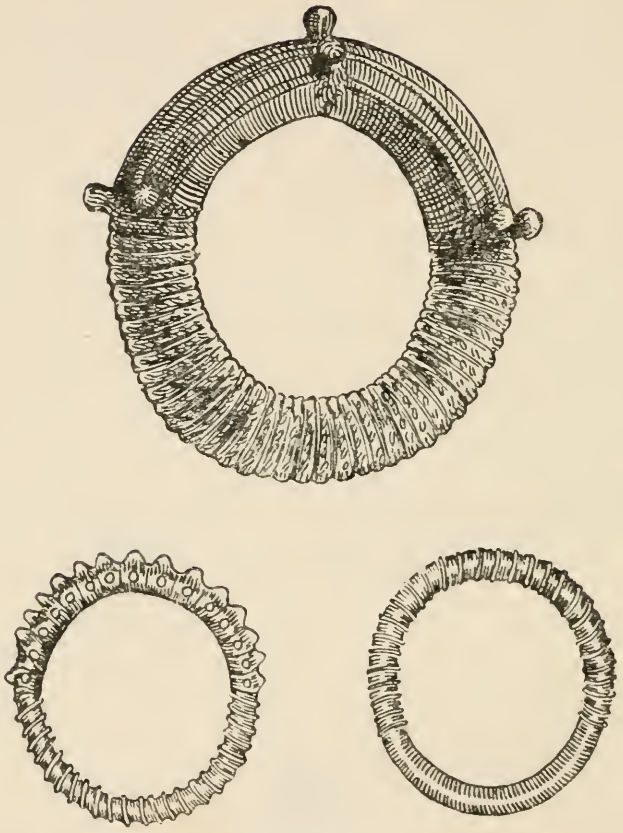
The drawing and drinking of mimbo are quite a feature of native life in many districts. The calabashes fixed in the trees for its reception are removed in the early morning, and again at sunset. The morning mimbo is the most highly prized. The collectors call to one another in shrill and carrying tones, as they pass from tree

*Not to be confounded with the milk of the cocoanut palm.

to tree, coming back with many calabashes suspended from neck and shoulders. The chiefs, equipped with drinking cups, await their return in the 'Efe' house. There are regular mimbo clubs, whose members boast the quantities consumed.

On entering a native dwelling in the Ibibio country, you are generally offered mimbo. It is strained from a filthy jar, through a bunch of fibre held in the dirty fingers of your host, into a foul and smoky cup. He first treats himself to a mouthful, spills a little on the floor, and then hands you the vessel. You must try to forget everything that offends the sense of sight, taste, or smell, and grimly drink to the last drop. Otherwise your native friend will imagine you are ill, or will feel you have insulted his hospitality.

Ornamented Drinking Cup.



IDIONG RINGS,

The only Insignia of Members of the Idiong Secret Society, always worn on the head

The large ring is only worn by those who have reached the highest grade of Membership

Photo by Mr Westgarth.] TWO IBIBIO GIRLS.

CHAPTER III.

The Qua Iboe People.

Coming, coming, yes, they are,
Coming, coming, from afar;
From the wild and scorching desert,
Afric's sons of colour deep;
Jesu's love has drawn and won them,
At His Cross they bow and weep.

Abundant evidence of the density of the population in Qua Iboe is furnished by the crowded state of the roads, the size of the bush markets, and the number of villages, which in many districts are so close together that no stranger could tell where one ends and another begins. Altogether there must be well over 1,000,000 people in the country belonging to at least five different tribes, speaking five distinct dialects.

Only one of the dialects—the Efik—has been reduced to writing, by missionaries of the United Free Church. As education spreads, Efik will probably become the language of the whole country, if it is not displaced by English.

A few scattered towns at the mouth of the river are occupied by a small tribe called Ibunos. It is thought they are a section of a larger tribe in the west, who, having separated from their

own people, settled on uninhabited ground near the sea, where they support themselves by trading and fishing.

They excel in trading, even among Africans, and for years were the only middlemen between Europeans at Calabar and the natives of the interior, exchanging cloth, gin, and household utensils for palm oil, nuts, and timber. They still act in this capacity, meeting with keen competition from other native traders from Opobo and Bonny, who have swarmed through the creeks in recent years.

The Ibunos are also expert fishers. Towards the end of the wet season the river and creeks abound in fish—September being known as the "fish" (eyak) month. They are caught in great quantities, dried and salted, and transported up country, where they are sold, or bartered for yams and oil.

A Fish Trap.

More recently the Ibunos have made clearings on the right bank of the river, where they have now many farms filled with yams and Indian corn.

They are, on the whole, an intelligent people, peaceable in their disposition, and possessing admirable qualities. Their features are not of a pronounced Negro cast, and the young have pleasant faces and attractive manners. They have made a wonderful response to the Gospel.

As a result, their whole social condition and style of living have vastly improved in the last twenty-five years.

Behind and north-east of the Ibunos, is the home of the Ekets. They are separated from the river by a region of swamps, and their towns are away from the waterways. A warlike tribe, they long defied the British Government, and dominated the peaceful Ibunos. They were subjugated about twelve years ago, not without bloodshed. About that time some of them had commenced to visit the Mission House at Ibuno, and to appeal for the Gospel.

They are excellent farmers, and their yams are justly prized. Their country is one continuous plantation from the banks of the river to Ikotobo ; and after receiving the first showers of the rainy season, their farms are a delight to the eye. They also work in brass and iron, carve wood, and fashion the skins of animals into sheaths and hunting-bags.

The most numerous people in the country are the Ibibios. They extend from the Cross River to near the Niger. They are probably the stock natives, from whom most of the small tribes in Qua Iboe and Calabar have sprung.

The people of this tribe vary greatly in different localities ; but as a rule they are more degraded and more under the power of West African superstition than the Ibunos. In the past

many of them were in slavery. Perhaps this helps to account for their miserable appearance in certain districts. Some of the old men resemble the lower animals almost as much as human beings. Many of the women are sour-looking and repulsive. Their closely-cropped heads, short faces, and flat noses contribute towards a most unwomanly appearance.

But there are numerous exceptions. Many are industrious and progressive. They make earthenware adorned with ingenious devices. They weave mats and even cloth from grass and fibre, dyeing them in imitation of the patterns on imported cotton.

In common with all Pagan people in Southern Nigeria, they are rapidly changing. The new order introduced by the British is producing a deep effect. The people have become ambitious, eager to acquire knowledge, and to prepare themselves for playing their part in the modern era that has dawned on their land.

The Obiums live due north of the Ekets. Their country is reached by the Government Road from Eket to Oron, or by a large creek entering the river about twenty miles from the sea. North of this tribe lies the Nsit country, extending nearly to Uyo. The Nsits are really a branch of the Ibibios.

About ten miles above Uyo we come to the first towns of the Inookims or Aros. They are

nearly as numerous as the Ibibios, and are one of the divisions of the Ibo-speaking people living north and west of that tribe. Aros are also met with near Enen, and at Ikotekpene we are on the real threshold of their country, which is only partially in Qua Iboe.

The tribe to which a person belongs can always be discovered by the marks on his face or chest. They are scars from cuttings made in the flesh in infancy. Some of them are very elaborate and must have caused excruciating pain.

The members of these tribes differ in features, physique, and language, but their customs and religious beliefs are very similar.

They are all pure animists, with a vague idea of a Supreme Being, and an intense belief in evil spirits. They think of God as too great and distant to have any interest in human affairs, and they believe that their whole life is under the influence of malignant spirits, whose wrath they seek to appease by constant sacrifice. Thus worship is degraded into an effort to gain the goodwill of the spirits by bribery. The spirits are represented by objects known as Ju-Jus. Fetishes are not all in the form of idols—they may be birds, insects, and even trees or plants.

The Ibunos sacrifice to God as well as to the spirits. In doing so they always select a white animal, and in the case of a human sacrifice, the victim was dressed in white. They seem to

have higher ideas of God than the Ibibios, and never represent Him by an image. They think of Him as punishing evil and rewarding good, and believe He hates oppression.

Human sacrifices were formerly common in every part of Qua Iboe. They were offered after consulting a witch-doctor, upon the death of an important chief, at the opening of a new market, or to drive away an epidemic. When a great chief died in the Ibibio country, several of his slaves were pinned to the ground by having stakes driven through their bodies, being thus transfixed until torn in pieces and carried off by leopards.

When the Ibunos made a human sacrifice, it was through no desire to shed blood. They believed the sacrifice would save life by preventing calamity and fighting, and they always gave themselves to rejoicing after it was offered.

For a long time the principal seat of fetishism in all Southern Nigeria was at a place near Bendi. People came from the far interior, as well as from the distant coast to consult this oracle—the famous Long Ju-Ju—until it was destroyed by the Aro expedition in 1902. Nearly all the tribes from the Niger to the Cameroons were compelled to send large numbers of slaves for sacrifice in this shrine.

Every bush path is bordered, and every town girdled by Ju-Ju houses, many of them so small as to be almost unnoticeable. Any person may

make an offering of food or drink to the idols in these wayside shrines. No one but the priest, however, is permitted within the inner apartment of the principal temple. And even he is not supposed to enter without the blood of a sacrifice, borne in a basin, and sprinkled over the large idols unseen by any eye but his.

Sacrifices of animals, food, and drink, are offered on the most trivial occasions, and constantly during illness ; the idea being to persuade the spirit causing the sickness to withdraw. There are personal idols, family idols, and idols for the town or district, so that if there is little furniture in the native houses, they contain many idols, together with countless charms to protect against evil spirits and misfortunes of all kinds. These are known as *Idems* and *Iboks*. And as if they were not fully effective, a special ceremony is performed in November to banish all spirits and the ghosts of the departed from the place. In some homes there are little household objects (*Isu-egbo*) representing the spirits of deceased friends, to which sacrifice is made in time of adversity.

The natives are firm believers in the potency of medicine. Several preparations are made by the witch-doctors, and sold at high prices. It is not always thought necessary that the medicine should be taken by the patient. It may not even require to touch him. It is its operation on the evil spirits that counts.

But all medicines are not for the benevolent purpose of healing. Many are specially designed to blight, to curse, and to destroy. One known as Ata-idiok-ibok—"real bad medicine"—is believed to kill a man if sprinkled on his body, to cause loathsome sores when scattered among a crowd, and to induce barrenness in all the women when spread throughout a town.

Oaths are ratified by *Mbiam*, a mysterious medicine, supposed to kill by dropsy any who fail to keep them. The people of two towns seal the ending of a long feud by representative men from each taking Mbiam. On the other hand, on the outbreak of a quarrel, the opposing parties will sometimes swear by Mbiam never to settle it.

Ordeal to reveal guilt and detect witchcraft is practised throughout heathen Qua Iboe. A native accused of crime will readily submit to the drinking of poison or other dangerous test. In this way many innocent persons suffer.

In 1890, Mr. Bill says—"It is with feelings of shame that I write, a man was killed at Big-town (Impanek) last night, for being suspected of witchcraft. Such a thing takes place within a rifle shot of where we live, yet what can we do? If we could hear beforehand, or if the unfortunate man could escape to us, we could save him, but we never know until the deed is done."

All twin children born in districts untouched by the Gospel are immediately put to death,

Photo by Mr. Westgarth.] A Witch-doctor and His Client.

because it is believed that they bring a curse on the place if allowed to live. Strange as it may seem, the mother herself is often most active in seeking their destruction. In many districts she, too, is regarded with suspicion, and banished to an isolated dwelling.

Qua Iboe is a land of secret societies, and few reach maturity without joining one of the numerous orders controlling the customs, and governing the lives of the natives. Some of the societies have great power, due to the belief that their leading members are on terms of intimacy with evil spirits. Thus an Idiong man is a kind of spiritual medium. He is consulted by people in distress, in debt, or in sickness, from all of whom he receives great sums of money for his mediatorial offices.

Candidates for admission to the Idiong society are subjected to a long series of initiatory rites, during which they are even supposed to die. This is achieved by exhausting the person at some impossible task until he collapses. He is then placed inside a hut, and covered with a cloth, until it is thought advisable to revive him by slitting a piece out of his eyelid. Seven circles are then described on the ground, and he is required to step inside each until he reaches the last. There he stands, and is asked what he sees. He begins a course of deception, ceasing only at death, by forecasting some future event. He is then given a

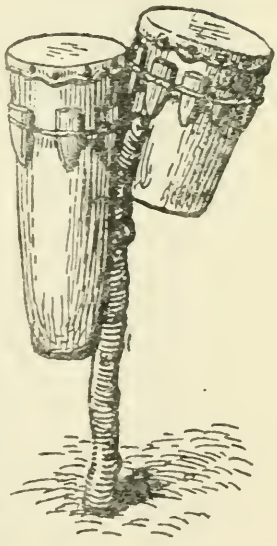
ring, the insignia of the order, worn on the head, and thenceforth lives on a plane far above ordinary mortals.

More dreaded even than Idiong is the great Egbo society, known in the Ibibio tribe as Akpanoyoho. It takes its name from *ekpe*, the native word for the leopard or panther. Another society called Ekong had immense power when tribal warfare was more common. When an Ekong man dies, his fellow-members honour his memory by jumping over the corpse. Memorial buildings to dead chiefs, so frequent along the native roads, are only erected to members of this society.

A feature of all the secret societies is their plays. Arrayed in the regalia belonging to the particular society, the members go through a strange body-dance to the sound of rude music, chiefly produced by drums. They twist and posture in such a way as to make their flesh quiver. The playing and rehearsals are so frequent that the sound of the drum is scarcely ever out of one's ears in West Africa. Its notes, with their monotonous rise and fall, are borne on the night air simultaneously from a dozen villages. The dancing and playing become fiercest about full moon. Then one can imagine that there is something in the old ideas about lunar influence, and that these people have been moonstruck into a regular orgy of playing.

If we visit one of the towns, we shall find a number of naked men squatted on the ground, facing in the form of a circle. One in the centre is beating a tom-tom at a furious rate, repeating the same four or five notes for hours. Another holds a small basket of nuts or shells, which he strikes on the ground and shakes with great vigour. The men in the circle are emitting a half guttural, half hissing sound, and at the same time swaying their bodies to and fro. At close quarters the effect is all noise, but at some distance there is a semblance of harmony.

When travelling from Ikotobo to Aka we once saw a remarkable play near a town called Ibisekpo. More than eighty drums were fastened in couples to posts about three feet high. These drums were in a long line, curved in at both ends. The perspiring drummers beat as one man, being directed by a sharp-eyed conductor, who stood in front wielding two small batons. He put his whole heart into his work, winding up each period of monotonous drumming by a great volume of sound, which rolled like a wave to and fro from end to end of the line.



Tom-toms arranged for playing.

Woe betide the performer who failed in his part. The conductor would stop, and eye him

up and down with a withering look ; or perhaps dart forward and give him a hard-sounding rap on the skull.

Several naked young men arose and danced one after another in the space before the drummers. The dance was accompanied by a singular turning and twisting of the body, bringing every muscle into action. At length, with a gesture of contempt, an old chief jumped to his feet, seized a spear, and went through a series of gyrations, doubtless to impress upon us the great superiority in strength and agility of the men of his generation, compared with the modern African youth.

Beating the Egbo drum.

The roar of the drums could be heard for miles, and the play was witnessed with great interest by many hundreds of natives.

There are several kinds of native drum, all belonging to two types. The tom-tom is made by stretching skin across one end of a hollow wooden cylinder. For the other a section of the trunk of a tree is selected. The inside is removed through two openings in the side, the ends being left intact. Different sounds are produced by striking at varying spaces from the slits. This is the Egbo drum, kept in every 'palaver' house,

where it is used to assemble the chiefs, to proclaim laws, and to transmit news from town to town. A regular code appears to be familiar to some of the natives, and the drum is a form of telegraph.

When the members of a certain order engage in regular play, the society is said to be "out." For the time being they are regarded as horrible spirits rather than human beings, and restrictions are imposed on all who are non-members. That no woman is suffered to see the "face of Egbo," means that she is not allowed to look at the masked members of that society, even they are her own friends. If by mischance or curiosity she happened to see Egbo in the old days, it meant instant death. Even yet it involves a severe flogging.

In Ibibio land there is a women's secret society, known as *Ebre*. Mr. Bailie, who has closely studied native customs, writes regarding this sisterhood—"Should an Ebre woman violate the eighth commandment, a strong force of the order proceeds to her house, and negotiates with her in a manner that could scarcely be called sisterly. This is just a little private chastisement. A more public punishment awaits her. On the next market day another escort leads her forth in the midst of taunts and jeers to disgraceful punishment. Before the assembled people the women pull off the prisoner's only article of clothing, tear-

ing it in shreds. Then any Ebre woman who feels inclined, can belabour her with a stick, a liberty so largely taken, that the poor, naked creature soon falls bleeding to the ground.

"This sanguinary treatment is only meted out to those caught red-handed. Any one merely accused of theft has to pass through a very different ordeal. The plaintiff, defendant, two witnesses and the local priestess, all go to a member of a class of Idiong, known as '*Okang.*' When this man has listened to the details of the case, he repairs to his private sanctum—a dark corner of his dark house, looked upon as scarcely belonging to this world—where he holds converse with the spirits. He soon returns, taking a furtive glance to see if his fee of 100 manillas (ten shillings) is in sight. Having satisfied himself, he commands the woman to bring him a piece of charcoal. At the same time he puts cayenne pepper in his mouth, so that when the woman hands him the charcoal he finds no difficulty in covering it with saliva. The charcoal thus moistened, he places in her hand saying—'Proceed.' Trembling she lays it on the ground, and says—'If I am innocent let the heart of this charcoal be white; if I am guilty let it be black.' What a moment of suspense as she extends her finger to press the charcoal, and what a shout of triumph should it be of a whitish colour inside! But if it is black—well it is a pity of the woman. So exorbitant are the fines

on one thus found guilty, that many a mother has to sell her own child to pay the amount."

Polygamy is a persistent custom all over the country. Women are the slaves of their husbands, serve as beasts of burden, and are bought and sold like cattle. The number of a man's wives is limited only by his personal tastes and his wealth. Many middle-aged chiefs believe in providing for the evening of life by buying mere children as their future wives.

There is little wooing, beyond keen bargaining with the girl's parents in regard to the price, which varies from £5 to £25. All the money need not be provided at once. It is often paid in instalments, and if any is owing after the girl is married, her people have a claim on her children, until the entire debt is discharged.

A girl may be betrothed at any age, but is not usually wedded until she is about fifteen. For months previously she undergoes a secret process of fattening, coming out of seclusion with the fat actually shaking on her body. For several days she is shown to all the people in the town, and then led forth to the degrading marriage ceremony by members of a secret society, bearing torches to frighten off the evil spirits. Up till they emerge from fattening, girls belong to a class known as *Nkai-feri*, and wear no clothing except a string of beads or cowrie shells.

If an Ibibio wife is suspected of unfaithfulness,

her hands are fastened to two trees in front, her legs extended, and tied to a couple of trees behind. In that painful position she is asked to confess, and to disclose the name of her guilty partner. Should she be slow to do so, her husband seeks to hasten matters by collecting a number of the all-devouring ants, and applying them to her body. Her helpless agony will soon compel her, guilty or innocent, to furnish the name of some man, who is afterwards heavily fined.

When a heathen dies, the air is rent with cries, and a dreadful dirge is chanted throughout the night. If he is a man of any importance, a quantity of cloth, gin, yams, and fowls (in the old days a number of murdered slaves) are placed in the grave. His wives are huddled into one small hut for a month. The Ibuno widows wear the same cloth they had on at their husband's decease as long as it lasts. The Ibibio widow exchanges her loin cloth, for a small piece about six inches square, which hangs in front like a tiny apron.

The soul of the deceased is not supposed to rest until the performance of *Ikpo*. This ceremony is enacted from six months till a year after the person's death. It was formerly the occasion for a fresh outbreak of killing among the man's wives and slaves.*

* See "Calabar and Its Mission," page 46, for a description of the awful slaughter of wives and slaves in connection with the obsequies of a Duke Town chief.

The African woman is fated for hard work. She has to provide for her own children, besides contributing to the support of her husband. Her three main occupations outside the house, are farming, marketing, and fishing. Her unending toil, her unhappy lot, and the trying climate soon make their mark; and ageing rapidly, her face assumes the air of fixed and hopeless dejection, so common among her sex.

The natives have two meals in the day: breakfast between ten and eleven o'clock, and dinner at nightfall. For an hour every morning they chew a kind of stick, which cleanses and preserves the teeth, and is said to aid digestion.

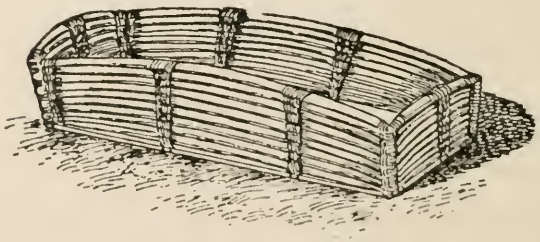
Their favourite dish, known as "palm oil chop," prepared after the manner of Irish stew, consists of a mixture of yam, paw-paw, dried fish, fowl, and herbs, highly seasoned with pepper, and strongly flavoured with palm oil. This dish is relished by many Europeans, particularly by those who have lived some time on the Coast. When cooking it, however, they do not use anything like the same quantities of oil and pepper as the natives.

They are truly at home when buying and selling. They love bargaining so much that articles are carried to many markets before being finally sold. These markets are held at convenient places on the roads, near the towns.

With filthy pipes in their mouths, or stuck in

their loin cloths, the women sit on the ground, weary after a long journey and a heavy load, surrounded with baskets of yams, cocoanuts, dried fish, pepper, snails, and pots of palm oil. Here and there are fowl tied by the legs, fettered kids, and even dogs, exposed for sale.

If the reader can imagine several hundred native women, all chattering and shouting, he will gain some conception of the noise of these markets, but it is difficult to have any idea of the confusion, the heat, and the acrid smells. A market thus renders us conscious of its existence through our ears and nostrils, long before the actual scene meets the eye.



An Ibibio Market Basket.

Photo by Mr. Weeks.] THE IKOTOBO MARKET ON THE GOVERNMENT ROAD.

CHAPTER IV.

The Pioneers.

He is breaking down the barriers, He is casting up the way,
He is calling for His angels to build up the Gates of Day;
But His angels here are human, not the shining hosts above,
For the drum-beats of His army are the heart-beats of our love.

A CHRONICLE of early missionary enterprise in West Africa is a record of the sacrifice of the lives of heroic men and women, who attempted to make Christ known in that land, when to enter it meant almost certain death. The climate made frightful havoc in the ranks of the little army that first attacked the legions of darkness on the Gold Coast, at Sierra Leone, and in Liberia. The Moravians were actually repulsed from the field after the death of eleven workers about 1770; but though the Church Missionary Society lost sixty-five at Sierra Leone, and the Basle Mission eighty-nine in Ashanti in the early years of the nineteenth century, they bravely persevered, wisely training and appointing as many native agents as possible.

Following the suppression of the slave trade in 1842, the eyes of Scottish missionaries, labouring among negroes in Jamaica, were directed to

the West Coast. The leader in this movement, which developed into the Calabar Mission of the United Presbyterian (now the U.F.) Church, was Rev. Hope Waddell, a native of the North of Ireland. Accompanied by Mr. Edgerley and two coloured teachers, he reached Old Calabar *via* the West Indies in 1846, finding the natives in an appalling state. The brutalizing influence of the slave trade, together with cruel superstitions, had reduced the inhabitants to the lowest depths.

Withstood by crafty chiefs, horrified by continual bloodshed, and depressed by the murderous climate, the pioneers suffered and toiled until at length a native Church was raised up, and after forty years, the work had extended 100 miles up the Cross River to Ungwana.

About this time (1886) members of the Ibuno tribe visiting Calabar for purposes of trade, were brought into contact with native Christians at Duketown; whilst a white trader, who had settled near the mouth of the Qua Iboe River, gave the chiefs some instruction about the Ten Commandments, assembled them on Sundays, and talked what they called "God palaver."

The light thus received created a desire for more, and an appeal was made for a missionary. This appeal, expressed in a letter in the name of a number of Ibunos, was carried along the sea coast, and up the Calabar River to Duketown. It was received by Mr. Foster, and

transmitted by him to the late Dr. Grattan Guinness, of Harley College, London.

Whilst God's Spirit was operating in this way on the minds of the Ibunos, He was preparing a chosen vessel who should be the bearer of His name to that distant tribe. From his birth in Belfast, in 1864, Mr. Samuel A. Bill had been prayerfully dedicated by a Christian mother to service in the regions beyond. His parents had to wait for eighteen years before witnessing his conversion. Then they had the joy of watching the birth and development of the missionary spirit in his heart.

He attended a lecture in Ballymacarrett Presbyterian Church, by the late Rev. Wm. Rodgers, LL.D., of Whiteabbey, entitled—"Glimpses at the Map of the World." By these lectures, Dr. Rodgers sought to rouse missionary interest, and to direct attention to the many unoccupied fields, still scattered over the globe. Thenceforth Mr. Bill felt constrained to spend his life in the evangelization of some part of the great heathen world. Several associated with him in Christian work experienced the same Divine compulsion. One of these—Mr. John M'Kittrick—became the pioneer of the Congo-Balolo Mission, where he fell a victim to the climate after five years' arduous work. Another, Mr. Archibald Bailie, followed Mr. Bill to Qua Iboe in 1888. Others like Rev. Samuel Morrison,

Mr. James Ferguson, Mr. D. M'Master, and Mr. R. M. Steele—to whom the way did not open—counted it a privilege to have fellowship, by gift and prayer, with those called to the front.

These young men found an outlet for their energies in connection with Home Mission effort among the careless and lapsed to be found in every large city. Beginning in Club Row, on the County Down side of the Lagan, they moved to a new hall, erected through their instrumentality in Island Street. At the same time they joined the Mountpottinger Y.M.C.A., resorting thither for mutual prayer and fellowship. All who came in contact with them were impressed with their seriousness in the study of God's Word, and the earnestness with which they addressed themselves to win souls.

Though so active at home, Mr. Bill's thoughts were continually going out towards those who had never heard the name of Christ. He prayed much that God's will might be unfolded. Many difficulties were encountered from the outset. In bringing His servant through these, God was preparing Him to meet the still greater difficulties that in after years confronted him in Africa.

When the cloudy pillar lifts and moves, hearts in which the call of Christ has been heard, will follow, though obstacles lie thick on the pathway. It was so in Mr. Bill's case. In answer to prayerful waiting on God, the barriers gradually

disappeared, and in 1886 he was able to enter Harley College for a course of training, being followed by Mr. A. Bailie in the succeeding year.

In 1887, whilst the students were at breakfast, Dr. Guinness read the letter which had reached him from distant and unknown Qua Iboe. The West Coast of Africa was far from being a desirable sphere, but this touching appeal came as a definite call, and Mr. Bill was led to offer himself, that the Gospel might be carried to those who had made known their readiness to receive it.

He sailed on 14th September of the same year, Dr. and Mrs. Guinness having defrayed the cost of his passage, besides furnishing the means for a limited outfit. Apart from this, Mr. Bill had no help. He hoped to support himself by trading or working, and at the same time teach the people, who desired to hear about God.

After a good passage the steamer reached Calabar on 6th October, and the desire of years was realised. In his regular reading of the Scriptures, Mr. Bill's portion for that day included the twenty-third Psalm. Nothing could have been more appropriate to himself, or to the enterprise upon which he had embarked. The goodness and mercy of God have been very real, and the Mission has known no want all these twenty-five years.

He arrived in Qua Iboe about 1st December, having spent a short time with Mr. Foster at Calabar, learning something about the people,

their language, and the prospects of work amongst them. In anticipation of receiving a missionary the natives had built a small house, which Mr. Bill roofed with corrugated iron, given him by a trader.

A common Ju-Ju image.

Making his lonely abode in this house, he visited the nearest towns, finding them full of idolatry. Whilst there were idols in every hut, the majority of the Ibunos worshipped a spirit known as *Nyena*, whose image or Ju-Ju was kept in a central temple, under the care of the chief priest of the tribe. They also made an annual sacrifice to the god of the river, to which all the chiefs were summoned. The victim, a young slave bound hand and foot, was thrown into the water, whilst drums were beaten in every canoe, and the people dispersed, feeling confident of an abundance of fish during the ensuing year.

He began work forthwith by teaching the alphabet to a number of young people every morning, and holding services on Sundays. It was possible for him to do so with the help of the Efik books, obtained from the Mission Press at Calabar, and by the fact that a coloured English-speaking trader named Williams, a native of Sierra Leone, had acquired the native language, having settled in Qua Iboe several years previously. Mr. Williams interpreted for Mr.

Bill, until he acquired sufficient grasp of the language.*

He soon discovered that the conditions of life, the methods of trading, and the nature of the native food precluded him from even attempting to make the work self-supporting. In these circumstances, he communicated with his old friends in Island Street, suggesting that they should help by endeavouring to raise £25 annually.

He suffered much not only from fever and its depressing effects, but from other hardships, and the quality of the available food. In a letter to a friend he said all was dark except what was visible to the eye of faith. He was sustained at this season by constant visions of the One Who had called him to that isolated spot. He was also cheered by the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Williams. When they saw he had trouble about his food, they invited him to partake with them; whilst they and others sent him gifts of fish and yams. Nor was he forgotten by Dr. and Mrs. Guinness, who despatched several supplies of stores. The rules of the Regions Beyond Helpers' Union did not allow this assistance to become permanent, and it was discontinued after the second year.

During the early days, Mr. Bill and Mr. Bailie often went to the creeks and mud-flats to shoot wildfowl for themselves and the houseboys.

* Mr. Williams not only interpreted, but assisted in the services for some time after Mr. Bill's arrival. He still resides in Qua Iboe.

These latter were nearly as good as dogs in retrieving fallen birds, for the Ibunos swim and dive like ducks. When a wounded bird dived, a boy was after it in a flash, quickly regaining the surface, generally with the bird in his hands.

Meanwhile, interest in the services and classes was increasing. Many of the natives were evidently pleased to have a missionary in their midst. Few were really hostile, and a number were earnest and attentive in listening to his teaching. Several of the young people were so eager to learn that they readily agreed to give an hour or two helping Mr. Bill to clear the bush around his house, in return for daily lessons.

The Sunday meetings were held in the yards of friendly chiefs, whose wives, children, and slaves composed the congregation. Before twelve months had elapsed, Mr. Bill pointed out the advantage of having a central place where all could attend. As a result, those in sympathy with the Gospel undertook the erection of a mud-and-wattle church, capable of accommodating 200. Altogether the outlook was so encouraging and the need so great that Mr. A. Bailie joined him before the end of 1888.

Soon afterwards a lad, named David Ekong, belonging to the principal priestly family, who came to live with Mr. Bill after his arrival and a woman called Etia, approached the missionary, asking how "God could put away

man's sin." The woman was converted almost immediately; but David remained in a state of anxiety. "The truth laid hold on him, and he was under deep conviction for several months. The thought of the Lord's coming was used by the Spirit to bring about this state, and he became possessed with terror at the thought—'Christ is coming, and I am not ready.' He could scarcely sleep; and the lightning and thunder, so terrific in the tropics, filled him with terror. He went three times to Mr. Bill's bedroom in a single night, and twice he arose and prayed with him, but the anxiety and distress remained. Soon afterwards, when visiting Calabar, another native lad, lately converted, got him to open his heart, and took him to a lady missionary, Mrs. Manson, who prayed with them both. David entered into light and liberty that day, and henceforth the idea of Christ's coming was a joy."*

Mr. Bill devoted some time every week to the instruction of these converts, until they confessed their new-found faith by public baptism a few months later. Others came seeking the way of life, and when Mr. Bill returned to this country in 1890, there were fourteen professing Christians and nine registered inquirers in Qua Iboe. Thus the Gospel took root, and a native Church was formed, which has grown in numbers and spiritual power, with the passing of the years.

The first Communion service in connection with

*"CALLED OF GOD: The Story of David Ekong," by Gracie Bill.

this Church, held on 18th February, 1890, is thus referred to in Mr. Bill's diary—" To-day the Lord's Supper was observed for the first time in Qua Iboe. Eleven sat down to the table, all with black skins—except Mr. Bailie and myself—but all looking to a common Saviour. Mr. Bailie spoke from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. There were about 100 people in the church, and they were most orderly and attentive."

The converts and inquirers required very careful teaching. Some of them clung most tenaciously to the belief in witchcraft. Nearly all thought they must do something towards their own salvation. Even Etia, one day, asked Mr. Bill if Christ would forgive her as she had now been baptized. He pointed out her error, and showed her that forgiveness does not come on account of anything she had done or could do. She saw her mistake with real concern, and after the class, came in great sorrow, beseeching him to pray for her.

Time was found for a journey into the interior in November, 1889. The missionaries visited a number of Ibibio towns along the river, staying at Indiya, near Etinan, for over a week. They were led to this town by Ibuno traders, and were well received. Being the first white men to visit the district, their presence created a great sensation. The natives listened respectfully, but had great difficulty in understanding what was told them about God.

Though the friends in Island Street had not guaranteed even £25, they were able to raise £70 in 1889, and £75 in 1890. Out of these amounts supplies barely sufficient for the missionaries' food were sent to the field. Early in the latter year, Dr. and Mrs. Guinness intimated that they could undertake no further help, at the same time offering to transfer Messrs. Bill and Bailie to the Congo. The missionaries replied that they could not see their way to leave Qua Iboe. God had set before them an open door from which they dare not withdraw. They felt He had led them to this corner of Africa, and that it would please Him to raise up friends and funds for their support. They were strengthened in this attitude by those who had come out from heathenism and required teaching, by the numbers who were groping towards the light, and by the knowledge that they were on the threshold of a country containing a teeming population, without a shred of the true knowledge of God.

Thus these two young men from the North of Ireland entered the valley of the Qua Iboe River twenty-five years ago to claim the country for their Lord, provided with no resources, save the promise of His presence, and possessing no remedy for the sorrows of its sin-cursed children other than the Gospel.

Mr. Bill came home partly to recruit his health, and also with the object of securing wider and

more definite interest in the new work. In this he obtained help. Ministers in Belfast freely gave him the opportunity of speaking about Qua Iboe to their people. His way was opened into Mission Halls and Sabbath Schools, with the result that many responded to his appeal by prayer and gift. He received valuable assistance from Mr. D. A. Black, of the Y.M.C.A., and from Mr. Robert M'Cann, then secretary of the Irish Union of Y.M.C.A's. Mr. M'Cann introduced Mr. Bill to many places in different parts of Ireland, and arranged meetings at which he gave an account of his three years in Qua Iboe.

There was something so practical and straightforward about his story, as to call forth the sympathy and gain the support of spiritual people from the very first. Whilst many of these early friends have been called away, it is gratifying to think that others who remain, have been most faithful all through the years. No Mission ever enjoyed the co-operation of more devoted helpers.

An Interdenominational Council was formed, of which Mr. D. C. Hamilton* was appointed Hon. Secretary, and Mr. Wm. Strain, Hon. Treasurer. Several members of the Qua Iboe Missionary Association in Mountpottinger joined this Council,

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* Mr. D. C. Hamilton continued to act as Honorary Secretary until he joined the South Africa General Mission in 1896, when he was succeeded by his brother, the late Mr. James Hamilton, who died in 1905. Mr. H. B. Niblock, now of Chefoo, was for some time associated with Mr. James Hamilton in the Secretaryship.

and the Association itself became the first Auxiliary of the Mission.

The first meeting of the Council took place in Mr. Strain's home, on 27th January, 1891. For twelve years the meetings were held in a room placed at the disposal of the Mission by Mr. Black and the Management of the Belfast Y.M.C.A. The growing nature of the work, rendered the use of a larger office necessary, and in 1903, home headquarters were secured in the Scottish Provident Buildings.

Before Mr. Bill returned to Africa, he wrote with a joyous heart—"Many friends have been raised up who have promised to pray for and otherwise aid the work, so that we can look forward with confidence—not so much in the friends, although many of them have become very dear to us—but in the Lord, Who has laid this work on their hearts, and caused them to take an interest in it. Now and again we meet with some who tell us that we should not go to Africa without a strong society behind us, that many of our new-found friends will forget about us after we return to the field. Some of them, perhaps, will, but the Lord will not forget us.

"If a large society could be found to take up the work it would be splendid, but all the existing societies have their hands so full, that they are not in a position to undertake fresh work in isolated places. Are we then to abandon those people of

Qua Iboe who have asked for the Gospel? Are we to leave them while God has been setting His seal to the work? Shall we desert them when He has been unmistakably saying, "Go forward?" Can we refuse to help them while superstition, cruelty, and spiritual darkness beset them on every side, and when the Gospel which has been entrusted to us for their benefit can set them free? Surely not. God's Word, His dealings with us, and the feeling of those who have the cause of missions at heart all answer, NO.

"We are entirely dependent on God, and we know that they who put their trust in Him shall never be confounded. He has all spiritual blessing and abundance to supply all our temporal needs, yet for everything He will be enquired of to do it for us. Let us prove by our practice that we believe in prayer, or rather in God. Remember that the salvation of the heathen and the carrying out of the Lord's command depend in a large measure on our prayers. Let us endeavour to lay hold of our God, with a tight grip of faith, coming to Him with full assurance, and He will hear and help us, because it is work near to His heart and pleasing in His sight."

Mr. Bailie meantime remained at Ibuno, receiving considerable encouragement in the services. Four more were baptized, and the effect of the new teaching became apparent in the lives of all coming under its influence.

Photo by Mr. Eakin.]

MASKED MEMBERS OF THE EGBO SOCIETY.

Two things occurred that at first gave him some anxiety. The great Ju-Ju house, which was fast becoming a ruin from neglect began to be rebuilt. Mr. Bailie soon found, however, that the main reason for this was that the people of another town had threatened to punish those responsible for the upkeep of the central temple. They feared that Ju-Ju would visit them with sickness and death on account of the treatment of his shrine since the missionaries entered the country. After a few days its restoration was abandoned, and was never resumed.

Ibuno music box—played with the thumbs.

The other matter was more distressing. New born twins were murdered close to the Mission House. On hearing of their birth Mr. Bailie hastened to the place, but was too late to prevent the deed of bloodshed. He learned that the children were not killed without *one* dissentient voice. A heathen chief, named Eshet, protested strongly, advising the father, a witch-doctor, to send them and their mother to the Mission ground.

But this cruel action proved the death-blow of the hoary custom. Mr. Bailie called a meeting of the chiefs, with the result that they promised to make a law, prohibiting the killing of twin children. This law was gradually extended until it applied to the whole tribe, and so far as is known these were the last twins killed in Ibuno.

CHAPTER V.

The Early Days at Ibuno.

> "The only sure and solid basis lies in the formation of individual Churches, as centres of new life and light from God of regenerating power for the whole people."

Soon after coming home Mr. Bill was married to Miss Gracie Kerr, who had just completed a course of training in the Deaconess Institute in connection with Harley College. Gifted with fine intellectual qualities joined to a sympathetic nature, and imbued with the missionary spirit, Mrs. Bill was eminently fitted to be a true helpmeet in her husband's work. Having accompanied Mr. Bill at the meetings held during his stay in the homeland, she got into touch with many who became interested in the Mission. To these friends both addressed brief farewell messages before sailing. They were printed in the second copy of the *Occasional Paper*, compiled and issued by the Hon. Secretary, to form a link between the operations in Qua Iboe, and the helpers at home.

These letters emphasized the central place of prayer. The workers realised that they had been called to a superhuman task, but they knew that supernatural power was available from the living Lord, and they had learned that the only way of access to that power is by the throne of grace. They felt that the whole future of this new undertaking depended on prayer. If "times of refreshing" were to be experienced on the field, then the workers there, and their partners at home must be often in the "presence of the Lord."

Together with David Ekong, who had accompanied Mr. Bill on his furlough, they sailed on the s.s. "Benguela," in May, 1891, reaching Qua Iboe before Mr. Bailie left for home, a month later.

Whilst much that met the eye in the outward habits of the semi-nude natives was shocking to the feelings of a sensitive woman, Mrs. Bill soon discovered that there was also much to love, and still more to draw out her sympathy, in their daily lives. Mr. Bill was cheered to find the number of anxious inquirers growing, and that none among the little company of professing Christians had gone back. On the contrary some had made great progress, showing zeal in setting the merits and claims of the Saviour before the heathen in their own homes, and in speaking to others, then unreached by the white missionary.

Among the more advanced was chief Egbo Egbo, the first convert of any standing in Ibuno, head of one of the most important families in the tribe. He was one of those who petitioned the Calabar missionaries for the Gospel, and from the first was a regular hearer of the word. After two years he came under conviction, but for a long time was quite unable to understand how salvation comes through faith alone. Receiving instruction from David Ekong, with rare humility, he at length saw the truth and accepted Christ, but before making open profession he counted the cost. A hard conflict ensued. He was a chief, and public opinion was opposed to the step he was about to take, and besides, personal difficulties stood in his way. In common with other Ibuno chiefs, he bought Ibibio slaves, and he traded in European gin. He was also the husband of twelve wives, and at the time of his conversion was in debt to European traders.

The gin traffic was his Waterloo. On its being mentioned in his first interview with Mr. Bill, he went away quite staggered, stating that when intoxicating spirits were first introduced the natives did not want them, but now called for them more than anything else.

He came back in two months still under conviction, but still unable to relinquish the trade in gin. The missionaries told him that they would not say he could not be a Christian unless he ceased

selling gin, but that its sale, as carried on in Qua Iboe, was opposed to the very spirit of Christianity, and that they could not see their way to baptize him as long as he continued to sell it.

In regard to this, Mr. Bill wrote—"The stand which we have taken will not, humanly speaking, tend to increase the number of Church members, but God will not call us to account for the number of members, but for our faithfulness to Him according to the light He has given us."

Two more months passed, and Egbo Egbo returned, this time with a beaming countenance, for the battle was over. He came to make definite arrangements for complete separation from the accursed traffic. He also renounced the slave trade, and pensioned off eleven of his wives. He was then united by a Christian marriage to his oldest wife, and he made successful efforts to pay his debt.

Thus in joining the fellowship of the Church he brought no dishonour on the name of Christ. And during twelve years, up till his death in 1901, he never took a backward step. He was on the side of every reform introduced by the Mission, and his whole influence was directed to the overthrow of the more cruel customs then prevailing in his tribe. Human sacrifices, the murder of twins, and trial by ordeal were abolished mainly through his efforts. In this way he lost

favour with many of the heathen, and his power in the 'palaver' house fell. Through tact and reasonableness it was gradually regained, and when the British Government established a Native Court in Ibuno, he was appointed a magistrate, and elected its first president.

He was very keen on learning to read, and thoroughly appreciated the value of education. When others made their houses of grass and leaves, he built with mud and wattle, and when they advanced to mud and wattle, he erected a frame house.

He devoted much time to God's work, and was an elder for four years preceding his death. When trading far up river he preached to the Ibibios, and he was the first person to enter the Eket country with the Gospel.

He died during an epidemic of smallpox, which deprived the Ibuno Church of many members. When seized by the fatal disease, his great concern was the fear that in delirium he might call on evil spirits, and he begged the Christian members of his house to pray that God would guard his tongue, that he might name the name of no evil spirit. He passed away in great agony committing himself to the Lord Jesus. Many of the heathen were greatly impressed, and freely acknowledged that there must be something in the Gospel to enable a man to die as Egbo Egbo died.

Etia, the first woman convert, was also a bright and decided Christian, ever ready to witness for Christ. She early testified to His power and love, and her life since has been the best testimony of all. She made great attempts to learn to read the Efik Testament, and never rested until a measure of success rewarded the efforts of many years. In 1899 she left Ibuno, to labour amongst the degraded Ibibio women at Okat, until compelled to abandon this work, through age and failing eyesight in 1909. She now lives with relations at Ekpenubom, north of Etinan.

Another bright Christian—Jimmy Mfon—whose young life gave promise of great usefulness, was killed by a shark within a stone's throw of the Mission House. He had bathed in the river with other boys, and was swimming to the shore when the monster seized him. He freed himself twice. The third time it tore nearly all the flesh off his leg from the knee up. Just then a slave lad came to his aid, and succeeded in getting him ashore. It was an act of great heroism, but it was in vain. Mr. Bill endeavoured to restore animation, but Jimmy did not regain consciousness, and died in a few minutes. He was interred behind the church, being the second native to receive Christian burial. The grief of his mother was pitiful to behold, and her son's death was eventually the means of leading her to seek the Saviour.

Several twins were born in 1891. The chiefs insisted on the law against killing them being respected. But if not still-born, the little ones generally died. This strengthened the attitude of those who wished to see the old customs observed.

Egbo man in full Regalia

The heathen people made palaver, because Christian young men were growing up without joining Egbo, or rather without paying fees to be made members of that powerful society. There was unending trouble, too, through persons being charged with witchcraft. Formerly these poor wretches were doomed ; now the chiefs agreed that the killing should cease. For some time attempts were made to get behind this law. Witch-doctors from Eket were consulted regarding suspected cases. Several were pronounced guilty, and lived in terror of execution. But the progressive chiefs, particularly Egbo Egbo, Eshet, and Okut-Ibuno, ever watchful, adopted measures for their protection.

Persons were occasionally brought to the Mission and left for treatment. Failing to discover distinct symptoms of disease, the missionary was puzzled until he learned that their relatives had brought them—not so much on account of illness—as in the hope, that in the white man's custody,

they might be beyond the reach of some witch having designs against their welfare.

It was understood from the first that the ground given to Mr. Bill was a kind of sanctuary, where those innocent of actual crime should be safe. It was soon occupied by a number of fugitives with their families, and the place has now become a little town.

The everyday customs of the people were in direct conflict with the Word of God ; and Mr. Bill had many difficulties dealing with converts, who had grown up in sin-defiled surroundings. In Africa precedent is everything, making it all the more essential for the missionary to lay a sound and Scriptural foundation. He exercised great care and patience in seeking to guide the inquirers. In cases of exceptional difficulty, his practice was to call all the Christians together, read to them passages in the New Testament bearing on the subject, then invite their co-operation in deciding what should be done.

Though baptisms took place at frequent intervals the candidates' class kept growing. The first published Annual Report, issued in February, 1892, records thirty-five church members and six inquirers. A year later the inquirers had increased to forty, all deeply earnest, but densely ignorant.

Referring to these Mr. Bill writes :—"How slowly does the truth that salvation is a gift

through Jesus penetrate the thick darkness of their souls! It is hard for them to grasp the fact, that God does not look on them with favour because they seek Him by coming to the church and the class, or by giving up old fashions. They jump at salvation by works, stumbling at salvation by faith; and this is the point on which we probe them. How powerless we feel, when face to face with these dark but seeking souls, to make them understand the glorious simplicity of this soul-saving truth, and how much we stand in need of the Almighty Spirit to perform His gracious work!"

Again he says—"It is very possible to have heart knowledge of Christ, and yet be able in a very small measure to define the doctrines, which are the embodiment of the great plan of salvation. He who would show sinners the way must have a clear view and firm grip of them, but what I need, and what these people need most of all, is to see and know Christ. If their eyes are fixed on Him, their lives will be transformed. There is a danger of them coming to look on communicants' classes, baptisms, prayer meetings and the building of churches as the kernel of their religion, while it is, indeed, only the husk. We need more true spiritual life, by which alone spiritual life can be discerned."

The old Mission House—the very site of which is now a portion of the bed of the river—was the

scene of many interviews with individual natives about spiritual interests. In spite of improper domestic relations in the case of some, of unlawful trade on the part of others, and the deep hold of corrupt customs on all, the missionaries saw many coming right out and following God. Some born into the Kingdom at this period are still among the most devoted followers of Christ in Ibuno.

Whilst these things gladdened Mr. and Mrs. Bill's hearts, their health was brought low by many fevers. In Mr. Bill's case, these culminated in an attack of the dreaded haematuria in December, 1891, which left him in great weakness. It was the most dangerous illness from which he ever suffered. His life was only preserved in answer to unceasing prayer, and through his wife's unwearied nursing. When at his worst the Christians met three times every day to intercede for his recovery.

David Ekong was a great help in this period of trial. He was at Duketown when he heard of Mr. Bill's condition. He and a cousin immediately started for home. They gained the mouth of the Calabar River after eighteen hours' paddling. They walked along the shore from Tom Shotts to Ibuno, a distance of thirty miles without a halt. They arrived at the Mission House, footsore and weary in the middle of the night, to find their beloved teacher had been brought back from the very gates of death. David's definite work in

the Church and school dates from this time. In the following August he was appointed the first native teacher in connection with the Mission.

Previous to this and after the birth of her daughter Emma, Mrs. Bill was very ill, and the child itself had intermittent fever for a long time. After nearly two and a-half years she was obliged to leave for home, so reduced that she had to be carried to the steamer. Mr. Bill accompanied her up the Coast to Accra, from thence with her two little ones, attended only by a native girl, Mary Egbo Egbo, she undertook the long voyage to Liverpool.

It is not surprising that Mrs. Bill's health suffered. In addition to household duties and teaching, she had many trying and difficult cases of nursing among the native women. She had to make and change the poultices in treating persons suffering from pneumonia, always prevalent in Ibuno throughout the wet season ; and the Mission House was scarcely ever without patients demanding constant attention.

During Mr. Bill's first term in Qua Iboe he formed the idea that the work of preaching, teaching, and healing should be supplemented by the establishment of some kind of industry. It soon became evident that the growth of the Mission depended on the provision of stations for the white workers, as well as churches and schools for the natives. There were no stones, or clay

suitable for brick-making in the country, but timber was plentiful, and so Mr. Bill was led to think of a steam saw-mill.

The matter was earnestly discussed with friends during his first furlough, when £80 was contributed. On his return, Mr. Bill approached Sir Claude M'Donald, then Consul-General of the Niger Coast, resulting in the drawing up of a scheme for the training of native lads in carpentry, towards which the Government undertook to give a small annual grant. The industrial department was thus inaugurated in 1894, with a staff of seven boys, to remain in training for four years each.

The opening of the saw-mill was a big event in the eyes of the natives, many of whom were quite incredulous when Mr. Bill used to tell them how he could make a saw cut wood with steam. Hundreds came to see the marvellous contrivance, and everything worked well, except the travelling table. Mr. Casement,* the acting Consul, who was present, was highly pleased, and gave a personal subscription towards remedying the defect in the table.

The amazement of the natives soon changed to action. The Christians and inquirers had for some time recognized the need of a new church

* Now Sir Roger Casement, H.M. Consul-General in Brazil, who investigated the Rubber Atrocities in the Belgian Congo, and in Putumayo (Peru). Sir Roger Casement belongs to the North of Ireland.

to replace the old, ant-eaten native building. They had even gathered £8 towards its erection. They had wistfully thought of an iron structure, but the cost of material, and their own poverty forbade them to set their hearts on such. Now the saw-mill altered the whole situation. They had little money, but taught by the everyday example of the missionaries, they could work. They were soon away in the jungle cutting timber, hauling it through the bush, and towing it down river to the saw-mill. Even the women took part, going to the mangrove swamps, and procuring firewood for the boilers. A large quantity of timber was soon ready, and upwards of £50 was freely contributed towards the purchase of corrugated iron, bolts, and nails.

When Mr. Bill sent home for the iron, the question of a site occupied the minds of the Christians. The most central town in Ibuno—known as Obarakan—lies about one mile up the river from the old Mission ground.

In this town the priestly family resided and the principal temple was situated. The chief priest of the tribe was David Ekong's grandfather, who opposed the work till his death in 1892. He left no successor, and after some time the owners of the ground, which had been sacred to their god for generations, gave it to Mr. Bill as a free gift.

It was soon agreed to build the new church

on part of this ground. The undergrowth was cut away, the natives finding many bones and skulls, relics of the old worship, in making the clearing, and in a short time, the framework of a church, capable of seating 500 people, became visible.

Its opening was hastened through the collapse of the old church in 1894. As more money was raised the building was completed. Elevated on many hardwood posts, and facing the river, it forms a familiar landmark. A large bell in a wooden tower, purchased by the members to replace one given by friends in 1891, summons the people of the three adjacent towns to church and school.

Though in poor health when at home, Mrs. Bill lost no opportunity of pleading for Qua Iboe. Accompanied by Miss Jackson* and Mary Egbo Egbo, she visited the South of Ireland, where interest was aroused that has never declined. When she again sailed, in August, 1894, she did not go forth alone. Mr. John Kirk, of Belfast, heard the " call " through her lips, responded, and was accepted by the Council earlier in the year. His practical knowledge indicated fitness for service in such a country as Qua Iboe, where successful missionaries must be prepared for tasks requiring skill, as well as rough manual labour, discharging all before the eyes of the natives in such a way as to exhibit an object lesson in applied Christianity.

* Now Mrs. D. C. Hamilton, of the South Africa General Mission.

From the very first Mr. Bill and the others undertook the most varied duties. In addition to their labours in the Gospel, they had to clear and plant ground, find material, build houses, do smith work, repair and paint boats, prepare and prescribe medicine, nurse the sick, and, above all, hear and judge incessant palavers between individuals and towns. Later on Mr. Bill successfully tackled printing, book-binding, engineering, soap-making, and launch-building—constructing the hull of the present motor launch from native timber in 1903.* The effect of these operations was not lost on the natives. Chiefs and heads of families who looked upon all manual work with scorn, leaving it to their womenfolk and slaves, were soon to be seen felling trees, building houses, and carrying yam sticks.

During his wife's absence, Mr. Bill was overjoyed with the work of David Ekong and other young men who had commenced to hold meetings in the yards of the chiefs. Great crowds listened to David. The Spirit of God came upon the hearers, and many were deeply convicted. Several notable conversions took place, the inquirers' class received almost daily accessions, and attendance at the day school increased.

* The steam launch "Evangel," with boiler adapted for wood fuel, met with several accidents, and sank twice. On the second occasion Mr. and Mrs. Bailie had an exceedingly narrow escape from drowning. Mr. Bill transferred the engine and boiler into the new hull, where they were in use until 1910, when two or three friends provided a motor engine for the launch, as well as a small motor boat.

Mrs. Bill's health again broke down, and once more she was borne away from the people and the work she so truly loved.* Mr. Bill followed her for furlough in 1895, having completed seven years' actual work in Qua Iboe, during which many had professed conversion, several old customs disappeared, the Lord's day was observed, and the beginnings of pure family life had arisen amid the corrupt conditions of heathenism.

* Mrs. Bill's health has repeatedly given way under the climate, and she has had to spend a considerable portion of time (apart from her husband) in Ireland. She was in Qua Iboe from May, 1911, until September, 1912 when she came through the most dangerous illness from which she ever suffered. A severe attack of haematuria supervened on a long series of malarial fevers. She was attended by a Government doctor, who together with Mr Bill gave up all hope of her recovery. When she was thought to be dying the Ibuno Christians rang the bell, and the church was filled with men, women and children, who with tears pleaded for her life for over two hours. The Christians in other parts of Qua Iboe, to which the news of her illness was carried, held similar meetings. To the surprise of the other European workers, who had gathered at Nditea, the alarming weakness passed away, and the dangerous heart symptoms subsided. A week afterwards Mr. Bill was able to place her on board the ocean steamer, and she safely reached home.

Photo by Mr. Eakin] HEADQUARTERS ON THE FIELD: NDITEA MISSION HOUSE.
ERECTED TO REPLACE THE ONE DESTROYED BY FIRE AT IBUNO.

CHAPTER VI.

A Native Church in Being.

"A policy of true evangelism must aim to establish a self-sustaining Church—that is, a Church which is independent of foreign money, and which is manned with its own ministry."

When Mr. Bill returned to Ibuno in 1896 he was accompanied by a new worker, the late Mr. Edward Heaney, who had been trained at Harley and Cliff Colleges. Mr. Heaney laboured with great zeal in every part of Qua Iboe until he severed his connection with the Mission in 1908. He then took up work in the Canadian Presbyterian Church in Ontario, from which he was suddenly called to the Higher service in 1910.

During his first year in Africa his preaching was followed by immediate results, evident in great accessions to the inquirers' classes and the baptism of large numbers of professing Christians. This awakening coincided with a time of increased prayerfulness at home. Members of Council and other friends came together for special intercession—the date of their first meeting marking the beginning of a new era of the Holy Spirit's work in Ibuno. The blessing extended to Impanek and Second Town, where out-

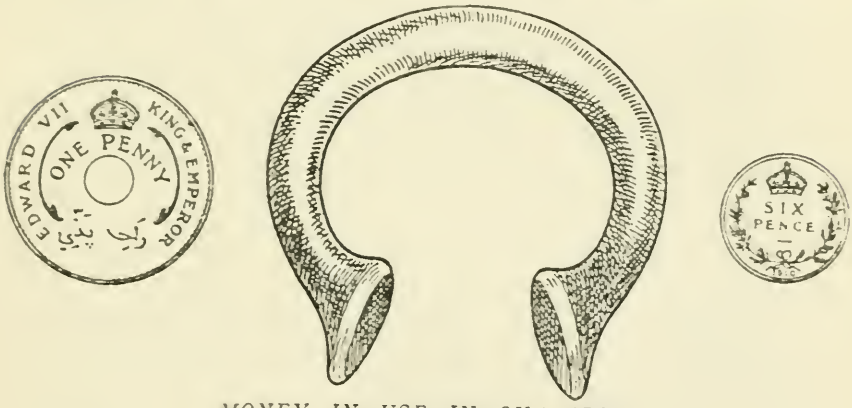
stations had been established by Mr. Bailie. At the end of 1898 there were over 300 communicants on the rolls of Ibuno Church.

Several important steps were taken about this period. David Ekong, who had been married to Mary Egbo Egbo three years earlier, was appointed pastor of the congregation in 1898. He had acted as a native teacher for several years, having prepared himself by mastering English and acquiring a good general education. Above all, he had learned something of the power of the Holy Spirit, and definite cases of conversion attested the fruitful character of his work. His preaching has the convicting as well as the winning note. It has been blessed to the Church members, deepening their concern for those still in darkness, fostering in their hearts the missionary spirit, and leading them to follow Christ in paths of self-denying service. He revisited this country in 1910, addressing many meetings, when the story of his conversion, and his striking account of the work in Ibuno proved deeply touching to all who heard him.

The native Christians, having got through the building of the iron church, undertook the full support of their pastor from the date of his appointment. Mr. Bill had taught them to be self-reliant, to count it a privilege to give from their scanty means, and to exhibit their love to Christ by acts of sacrifice. His teaching bore

fruit, and a weekly offering was made towards the Lord's work from the formation of the Church.

About 1895 Mr. Kirk inaugurated a special thanksgiving offering on the Monday following each Communion, usually observed once in two months. This beautiful service of giving is now a notable event in all the Churches in Qua Iboe. The peals of the bell proclaim the hour, and the members quickly assemble. After singing and



MONEY IN USE IN QUA IBOE.
(DRAWN TO SCALE.)

Penny introduced by British for Northern and Southern Nigeria—with hole in centre for stringing—not popular.
Manilla—old coin, now going out of currency.
English sixpence, which with other silver coins, is becoming common.

prayer, the native pastor takes the Communion Roll Book, and calls out the names one by one.

As each name is announced, the person advances to the front bearing an offering as an act of worship, and thanksgiving for God's goodness since the last Communion. The amount is entered opposite the donor's name, and the

money deposited in a box. In this way the entire list is called over, and there are rarely any blanks. Some bring a few pence, others several shillings. The oldest members, as well as those most recently baptized, feel they owe a great debt, and they are taught to discharge it by giving something to send the good news to the heathen in other tribes. A sum of over £20 is often contributed at a single meeting.

Another important advance was the appointment of elders and deacons. In 1898, after much prayer and thought, the three married teachers, and five of the most spiritual and intelligent members, were set apart to assist in the oversight of the congregation. Additions have been made to their numbers on several occasions since. The capacity of these men has grown with their work. They have been a great help in the life of Ibuno Church. Their duties in connection with the examination of candidates, the discipline and restoration of members, and the visitation of the sick have all been performed—as "unto the Lord."

Several of the elders have proved very fine Christians, with gifts of insight and leadership. The name of Egbo-Egbo has been already mentioned. Ibok, the present head of his family, was also one of the first elders. Though not closely related to the late Egbo Egbo, he is endowed with many of his qualities. Since his

conversion in 1889, his life has been a "living epistle," known to all in Ibuno. He has always set his face against evil customs and ideas, and has even been taunted for siding with the white man. In order to devote time to his duties as an elder, he curtailed his trading operations, which formerly detained him up the river for weeks at a time

His wife, Adiaha, has had a life full of vicissitudes. She belongs to the Eket tribe, from which she was banished after the birth and murder of her twin children. She became a slave, then a wife to Egbo-Egbo, and was one of those put away on the occasion of his conversion. She was afterwards married to Ibok, whose former wife had died. The beautiful home life of these two Africans preaches Christ to all who know them.

Thomas Akpan was another of the first eight elders. Converted through David Ekong, when a boy, he was one of the earliest Christians. He served his time in the Industrial Department, of which he became native foreman, in 1898. He was a man of great patience, and was faithful and painstaking in all his work till his death in 1903.

The deacons have kept charge of the offerings, the payment of teachers, and the changing of native money since their appointment in 1904. There being no banks in Qua Iboe, there was great trouble before the introduction of British money. The only native coin, called a manilla, value for

one penny, besides being cumbersome to handle, was, of course, useless for making purchases in this country. When it had to be changed, the usual procedure was to take it to the markets, buy palm oil, sell the oil to the European traders, and receive payment by money or draft.

In 1899 it was thought advisable to form the Christians at Impanek into a separate congregation, with the native teacher, John Ewainan, the first boy in that large town to profess conversion, as pastor. Before the opening of a regular school in Impanek, John was in the habit of coming to the Mission House in a small canoe, by himself, to receive instruction. For this he was often flogged by his heathen father. After his conversion he began to speak to individuals in his native place, where the darkness was then as midnight. He quickly learnt English, and was appointed to assist Mr. and Mrs. Bailie among the Ibibios at Okat, in 1894. Here he was married to Eka-ito, David Ekong's sister. He was afterwards transferred to Impanek, where he labours with as much diligence and greater success than he had experienced at Okat. The Christians, who are responsible for his support, gathered the necessary money, and built themselves a fine iron church, in 1905.

Some time afterwards, the converts at Okorotip, who had also erected a neat iron building, were separated from the parent Church at Ibuno,

to form a third congregation, with Abasi Mfon as their pastor. Abasi, who visited Ireland with Mr. Bill in 1896, commenced the work in that town in 1899, and through blessing on his labours some professed conversion during the following year. The numbers have grown until there are now over 100 members, besides many inquirers.

Whilst these three self-supporting congregations had manifested a missionary character from the first, they were now in a better position to undertake regular aggressive work. Opportunities presented themselves at their very doors. The fierce Ekets live so near, that their drums can be heard in the night. For many years they terrorized the Ibunos, whom they far outnumber. Even as late as 1900, they made raids on people fishing along the shore, and captured defenceless women, who were sold into slavery, or offered as sacrifices in their idol temples. On the other side, towards the west, are scattered villages of the Ibibios ; and still further away, in a region of mud and mangroves, dwell a degraded community, claiming kindred with the Ibunos themselves.

Requests for the Gospel now began to come from these different peoples. Response was at first made by voluntary workers like Egbo-Egbo and Ibok, who often went to Eket villages to tell out the story of the Cross. In 1904 the call became not only more definite, but more general. Eket chiefs came boldly and appealed for teachers.

The scarcity of suitable young men hindered and still hinders the work. But something has been done : the Christian Ibunos, forgetting the wrongs of the recent past, have sent teacher after teacher into Eketland.

Up till 1908 native workers were partly supported by the native Church and partly from home funds. After prolonged consideration, and realising that it was the principal duty of Christians at home to maintain the European staff on the field, the Council were led to adopt the principle—"THAT ALL NATIVE WORK SHOULD FIND ITS SUPPORT FROM NATIVE SOURCES."

This decision was communicated to Qua Iboe, and received not without a certain amount of misgiving and fear in regard to its working. The missionaries, however, heartily endeavoured to carry it into immediate practice. The results astonished themselves. Not a single out-station was closed ; many new ones were opened, and the givings of the native Churches rose from £300 in 1908, to £550 in 1909 ; which further increased to £1,000 in 1910, and £1,250 in 1911.

In Ibuno district the principle of self-support was already to a large extent in active operation. It had, therefore, its most marked effects at the stations up river. For instance, in Etinan neighbourhood, there were ten teachers on the list for assistance from home funds in July, 1909. This number had decreased to three in 1911. Now

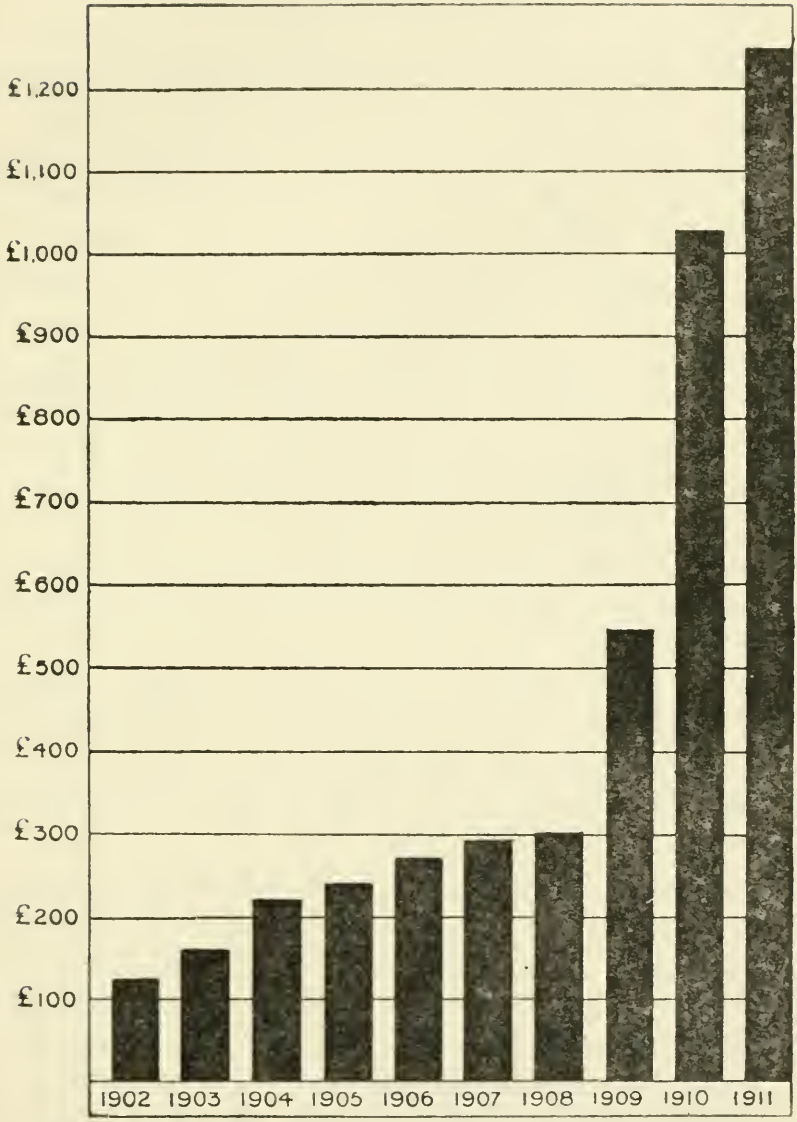


DIAGRAM SHOWING ANNUAL GIVINGS OF NATIVE CHRISTIANS IN QUA IBOE SINCE 1902.
In addition to contributions of money, they devoted much time to the building of churches and schools during these years.

there is not a single native worker in the twenty-two schools in connection with that station whose entire support is not raised on the field. For the allowances of native workers and towards the building of the new church, over £475 was contributed at Etinan in 1911. Ikotobo had three out stations, all receiving aid from home at the end of 1909. There are now eleven in that district all fully supporting their own teachers. The practice of self-help has brought blessing to the Churches and schools, and ensured that the future of the work should proceed on sound lines.

The central Church building at Ibuno has rapidly decayed since the white ants gained access, and for over three years the members have been preparing for the erection of a new one. By their own efforts they have raised nearly £500. The foundations of the new structure, which is to have concrete walls and ant-proof roof, have been cut, and the blocks have been made by natives under Mr. Bill's direction.

The native Church is now felt to be a real striking force in the evangelization of Qua Iboe. It is like a field army, partly recruited and directed by the white missionary, but the main fighting power comes from its own ranks. That its work is not in vain is already fully proved. In the Eket country, in the villages around Okat and about Etinan, large numbers of young Christians testify to the efficient labours of its agents. At

OLD JU JU HOUSE AT IBUNO

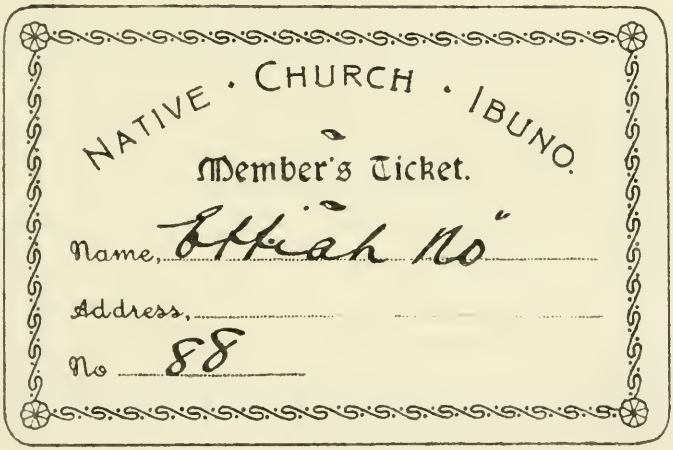
MOUTH OF ETINAN CREEK

ELDERS AND DEACONS IBUNO CENTRAL CHURCH

THE RIVER AT NDITEA

A LOG FOR THE SAW MILL

Afa-ekut, an out-station in the Eket tribe, where Ebong Mfon, a brother of Abasi's, is located, there are now almost 120 Church members, and about an equal number of candidates for baptism—all brought to a knowledge of the truth through the work of native Christians. And at a baptismal service held at Ibuno, in March, 1912, when sixty-nine persons publicly professed their faith in



COMMUNION TICKET (Ibuno Central Church).

Christ, no fewer than forty-five hailed from various places in the Eket country.

In whatever part of Qua Iboe the members are scattered, they all come home for the bi-monthly Communion, even if it entails a journey of sixty miles. In order to associate them with the work of the native evangelists, a missionary meeting is held on the Sunday afternoon. En-

quiry is made into all parts of the work, and the teachers give accounts of progress in their different spheres of service.

The weekly meeting for prayer is a feature of the Mission at every centre. The work of the native teachers is always remembered at these gatherings, where simple and direct petitions ascend for unconverted relatives, for blessing on the outstations, or for some personal deliverance. These often receive immediate and tangible answers. It pleases God to reward the child-like faith of the young disciples. He teaches them, as it were, by object lessons in His kindergarten, until they gain a deeper knowledge of the spiritual life.

In 1904 a house was erected, and a small Training Institute opened at Okat, by the late Miss Gordon, who, by character and education, had special fitness for this work. Boys already converted, who exhibited aptitude for teaching, were admitted for two years' instruction in Biblical knowledge, English, and general subjects. Miss Gordon had to resign through illness in 1909, when she underwent a severe operation. Her health, afterwards seemed to improve, but the old trouble returning in 1911, caused her death. She was greatly devoted to the lads in training, and her life in Africa was made a blessing to many others. For some time subsequent to Miss Gordon's retiral, Miss Anderson had charge of the Institute, and had just gained the confidence of the boys when the

state of her health made it necessary for her to return home.* There is deep need for a fully qualified teacher in connection with this special work. If such were forthcoming, the Institute could be enlarged, and something more done to meet the eager cry for the light, that comes from all parts of the country.

Some of the teachers were trained in the Institute, and others by individual missionaries. In study they are earnest and plodding. What many of them lack most is a sense of responsibility and real interest in their work. There are bright examples, but the tendency is to take an easy course, and to allow the deadening influence of their environment to unduly drag them down. Where there is no passion for souls, other passions arise, which, if unresisted, bring ruin to the work and workers. The native helpers require the wise sympathy and guiding hand of the white missionary. Above all, they need prayer, for the power to win souls is a spiritual gift. Our teaching and example are helpful, but the essential fitness for service only comes through being kept in touch with God.

The majority of the native Christians are young people, which is another way of saying that they are poor. The chiefs and heads of families claim all the palm trees, and where they are hostile to

* Miss Anderson and Mr. Moyes were married and returned to Qua Iboe in 1910, but unfortunately they were unable to remain on account of a second break-down in Mrs. Moyes' health at the end of 1911.

the Gospel, do not allow the schoolboys and inquirers to gather and sell the nuts.* Hence, they have to devise many means of raising money for God's work. Some of them learn a little carpentry and improved house building from the missionary. They then hire themselves out to other natives to erect houses, bringing a third, a half, or even the whole of the money received to the church as an offering.

The following letter to Mr. Eakin, from a boy converted at Atabong, in the Eket country, discloses a method by which money is sometimes obtained by Christian lads from Qua Iboe, studying in the training school at Bonny, in preparation for teaching under the Government. Every student receives a cup of rice and a ship's biscuit for the day's food, and the biscuits sell at five a penny. The church referred to is the third to be built at Atabong, those who were against the work not allowing the other two to be erected inside the town.

"DEAR SIR,

On behalf of twenty-four Eket boys, who are at present in the Government School at Bonny, I am enclosing the sum of £1 2s. 8d., to be spent on the new church at Atabong. This money was given by the schoolboys with joy, and was raised by saving and selling

* In some localities whole groves of oil-palms are reserved by the Secret Societies, and a Ju-Ju mark is put on every tree to prohibit anyone from touching the fruit.

part of the daily allowance of biscuits given us to eat at the school. The list I am sending you shows how this amount was subscribed. I have the honour to say that we hope to help the church again, God willing, and some of us hope to do God's work, when we finish our schooldays.* We are happy, because God put it into the hearts of our chiefs to allow the church to be built in the centre of the town, and our hearts go with you in sending this money. We thank you, too, for your work for us in Atabong.—I remain, your obedient servant, THOMPSON OWEN."

Although he writes such good English, Thompson is a native boy, with heathen parents, and was never taught anything until he attended our school at Atabong. The list he supplies shows that some boys saved over 100, and others about 30 biscuits each.

The membership of the three Ibuno Churches has grown with great steadiness since 1898, until it now stands at over 1,000. There have been three well-marked epochs in this expansion. There was the season of prayerful sowing, from Mr. Bill's first arrival until the erection of the new Mission House in 1898. He was compelled to abandon the old house, which had witnessed the spiritual birth-struggle of so many souls, owing to the current of the river eating away the ground

* The writer is now a native teacher at Ikotobo.

on which it stood. Assisted by Mr. Heaney, he constructed a fine Mission House from native timber prepared in the saw-mill, on a site close to the new church, at a cost to the Mission funds of less than £200. Carpenters' shops, engine and boiler houses were also built on the same ground.

From then till 1907, the work enjoyed a period of growth, during which principles of government and policy were framed. In April, 1907, the Mission Station and its effects, valued at £1,000, were destroyed by fire. Once more Mr. Bill had to face the erection of a new house, which was built on a higher and healthier site, given by the Ekets, at Nditea, about six miles above Ibuno. He had very valuable assistance in clearing the ground, and in building, from Mr. Smith, Mr. Weeks, and the native apprentices.

The fire originated in the kitchen, whilst Mrs. Bill was attending patients in the dispensary underneath. Her husband was at Ikotobo, and despite the daring efforts of several natives, the fire rapidly spread into the main building. Messengers hastened with the news to Mr. Bill, and when he and Mr. Smith got back before daylight next morning, he found his wife at the beach with a wound in her head, and little remaining, save the charred ruins of the splendid house, built by his own toil.

The Ibunos gave touching proof of their love. The sorrow and loss of the missionaries opened a

channel, through which a stream of sympathy flowed to their relief. The Christians held meetings for special prayer. They contributed over £20 in money, and for weeks they ceased not to bring gifts of many kinds. The house was known as the "Ufok Erinyanga" (house of help) as there were few families in the tribe that did not owe the life or the restored health of one of their members to help received there.

After describing the origin of the fire, Mrs. Bill wrote: "Ibok came and offered us his frame house which was built by one of Mr. Bill's first apprentices. We gathered the remnant of our goods together, and are now fairly settled in the house. The Lord has been very merciful, for although the things saved are scanty enough, they will make all the difference between a little comfort and absolute want.

"Anything like the kindness of the native Christians I never saw. They have brought us gifts of cutlery, delph, household utensils, and even personal articles of attire since the day of the fire. They have given us their household treasures, that were as luxuries to them

"Mary, David Ekong's wife, has been like a daughter. David and she took me to their house and did everything they could to help and comfort me until Mr. Bill returned from Ikotobo. In addition to all, they sent us a little bag of native money, and Abasi also came with an offering. But

perhaps the one whose coming touched us most was our "mother in Israel," dear old Eka, who, in spite of rain and rheumatism, managed to reach David's house soon after 6 a.m. She placed her withered arms around us both and wept, then leaning on her staff, blessed us, and gave us into God's keeping."

When news of the fire reached home, a circular was sent to the friends of the Mission. Within three months over £900 was received by the Hon. Treasurer in special contributions, and the Council was able to replace almost everything that had been lost.

The building of the present house on the edge of Eketland, heralded a new era of wider service for Mr. Bill as Superintendent on the Field, and the more extended evangelising activities of the Ibuno Church. Like Issachar of old, it stoops between two burdens—the preaching of Christ in every village of the Ekets towards the east, and gathering into His fold the wandering outcasts in the swamps of the west. The bearing of these burdens will lift the Church into fuller fellowship with its living Head, for the saving of the lost is what draws us nearest Him.

Means have been adopted by holding periodical conferences to bring the leading members of the different congregations in Qua Iboe together. These conferences are attended by the white workers, and by native delegates. Questions

regarding native customs, and the life and work of the Churches are discussed, and the coloured brethren enter heartily into the proceedings.

A distinct step towards a larger object was taken in November, 1911. A Conference, attended by representatives from the Church Missionary Society, the United Free Church, the Primitive Methodists, and the Qua Iboe Mission, at which Mr. Bill had the honour of presiding, was held at Calabar. Concerted action in regard to the untouched fields of Southern Nigeria, the training of evangelists, and the discipline of the native Churches received earnest consideration. A wonderful spirit of harmony pervaded all the meetings, and important conclusions were unanimously reached. It was solemnly resolved that the aim of all missionary effort should be the establishment of ONE Church of Christ in Southern Nigeria.

[Photo by Mr Baillie] OKAT CHURCH, ERECTED 1909.

CHAPTER VII.

The Entrance to the Ibibio Country.

So shall the Cross to all be shown
As the blest word that tells the height,
The depth, length, breadth of God's great love—
The lost soul's passport into light;
Our living sacrifice shall help men see
True is the tale we tell of Calvary.

Mr. Bailie spent his first furlough, like Mr. Bill, in holding meetings for the extension of interest in the Mission, and in gaining medical knowledge to help him in ministering to the many diseased and suffering natives in Qua Iboe. During his stay at home he was married to Miss Martha M'Keown, of Belfast, who had a course of training at Doric Lodge.

They arrived at Ibuno in 1892, and spent some time with Mr. and Mrs. Bill, prior to the opening of a new centre. The natives in one or two places wished them to remain, build a house, and establish a second station in that tribe. The people of Impanek were particularly anxious to have them, and even offered the site for a Mission House. But the hearts of the missionaries were set on breaking new ground, by entering the Ibibio

country, where almost half a million people were living in total ignorance of God.

For this purpose Mr. Bailie made several journeys up river, seeking a point which would give access to many villages, and endeavouring to get acquainted with the natives. In the end a spot was selected beside Okat, and within easy reach of Impok, Awa, Ikorakpan, Esong, and numerous other towns. The exact position was a gentle eminence close to Awa Creek, two miles to the west of the Qua Iboe River.

Delays, which in Africa seem inevitable, arose through Mrs. Bailie's illness, the time spent in getting timber, and in clearing the site for the new house. Mrs. Bailie was very seriously ill for five weeks, during which her husband was kept in a state of terrible anxiety. The Ibuno Christians showed much sympathy in this trying season, meeting in the church at six o'clock every morning for a month to plead with God for her recovery.

Then it took a long time to fell the trees, divide them into logs, haul them out of the swamps, and float them down river to the saw-mill. Mr. Bill and Mr. Bailie were for weeks in the bush engaged in this arduous work. When a suitable tree had been selected, cut down and divided, matted undergrowth and roots, with innumerable tentacles, had to be removed, to make a way to the water. The severest part of all was getting

the logs through the soft ground close to the river, where a causeway of branches had to be constructed to prevent them sinking in the mud. This work had to be carried out in the dark, damp jungle, with leeches, ants, and numerous flies all doing their part to annoy and thwart the unfortunate white men.

Occasionally a tree came crashing down before the missionaries could clear out of the way. Indeed, the undergrowth was so thick and thorny that it was not easy to escape when a tree failed to fall in the direction expected. So the workers sometimes returned from the swamps with their bodies scratched and torn by prickly palms and rough shrubs.

The difficulties encountered in towing the logs down river were almost endless. The specific gravity of native timber that will resist white ants for any time is just greater than water. So lighter varieties of wood had to be attached to several logs to keep them afloat. Sometimes the raft thus formed caught on snags or stuck on sand banks. There was no derrick in those days, and on reaching Ibuno the workers had to roll the logs one by one up the river bank, to the terminus of a little wooden tramway, which had been laid from the beach to the saw-mill. The white ants attacked this, and reduced it to powder ; but having got the money, Mr. Bill was able to replace it with iron rails. The timber for Okat station, the

new saw-mill buildings, and the second Ibuno Mission House was obtained and brought to the beach in this manner.

When the material was ready, Mr. Bailie found the laws regarding the ownership of land exceedingly complicated among the Ibibios, making it almost impossible to procure a site for the new house. The old chief made great profession of friendship, and gave many promises about what he would do, but when viewing the place selected for the building, he said he owned no ground in that direction, and that he did not know to whom it belonged, adding, with a knowing look, that land was very dear in Okat. In order to get a little distance from the swamps bordering the creek, it was necessary to acquire about four acres, which had to be purchased from a dozen different owners.

The Qua Iboe Agent of the trading company (The African Association, Ltd.,* of Liverpool) lent boats, and conveyed the timber to Okat without charge. When the framework was fixed, and a couple of rooms boarded in, Mr. and Mrs. Bailie made their residence in the house, Mr. Bailie, afterwards, devoting his spare time to the completion of the building.

After living among the Ibuno people, who are noted for honesty, they were totally unprepared

* This Company has always shown practical kindness to the Mission, giving free passages and freight on the steamer between Calabar and Qua Iboe.

for the thieving propensities of the Ibibios. The very iron and timber were stolen. In fact none of it was safe until securely nailed on the house ; and the greatest vigilance did not prevent the theft of tools, native money, food, and fowl. At this period the missionaries had to store their small stock of furniture and cooking things in the bedroom every night, where alone it was safe till morning.

Garments were taken at such a rate, that Mr. and Mrs. Bailie were in danger of being reduced to a state of nudity, bordering on that of the natives. To retain any at all, it was necessary to employ a smart boy to keep watch and ward over each washing until the clothes were dry. The active pilfering slowly declined, and has now quite disappeared, but as late as 1900 the chief of Okat stole a couple of large bath towels, and soon afterwards attended church arrayed in one of them as his sole article of attire !

Apart from this vice, no words could describe the state of degradation in which the natives lived. The very air was heavy with superstition. The only forms of punishment for the slightest offences were selling into slavery, and death. Just before the advent of the missionaries the chief of Okat had killed three men, and sold several women, because one of his people had been injured in a brawl. And after their arrival, a youth, who planted some cocoa, and objected to

this chief selling it, was himself seized and sold as a punishment. An old woman was offered as a sacrifice, her body being thrown into a creek, near the Mission House, whilst the killing of twins was a frequent occurrence.

There was no church, and the people refusing to assemble for a regular service, Mr. and Mrs. Bailie took the Gospel to them in their own homes. In fact, they were happy to get people to listen to them anywhere. In return some wanted

Medicine Vessels used for holding Offerings to the Spirits.

medicine, others money, and some, clothes. Often in the midst of talking to a little group, several would suddenly bolt, as if they feared the missionaries' words were going to hurt them; or the conversation would be cut short by the appearance of Egbo men adorned for their plays.

Assisted by John Ewainan, from Impanek, they spent a part of every day visiting the huts. The natives proceeded with their usual work as they talked to them. The outside air is hot and oppressive, but it is nothing to the atmosphere within. An overpowering smoke from a fire of wood fills the house, and issues from the tiny

door. There is no light whatever, and one's eyes have to grow accustomed to the gloom, before the dusky forms of snuffing men and smoking women are even dimly visible. To speak about Christ in a way to interest and appeal to the intelligence of such people is nearly impossible ; and, unable to breathe the atmosphere for many minutes, the missionary soon creeps out under the low verandah, silently praying that God may use some word to break through the ignorance and hardness of heart that meet him in every hut.

The ideas of the people about God and the future were exceptionally low and material. One man said God would let him into heaven, because he would bring a good " dash " (present). The king of Okat told Mr. Bailie that when a young man he visited the mouth of the river, and beheld the sea with the big waves thundering on the beach. " That," said he, " is the kind of noise will be in heaven when I enter. I shall have a man to carry my snuff-box, another to bear my umbrella, a third to hold my staff, and a host of wives ; so all the people will shout when the king of Okat enters."

Two things helped the missionaries to get a little more into touch with these people. In 1895 Mr. Bailie bought additional land, and with some assistance from the Government, planted over three thousand coffee trees. After great trouble young men were taught to prepare the ground

and do the planting, and were in this way constantly about the Mission House. This coffee plantation was continued for over seven years, but soon ceased to pay, owing to decline in the price of West African coffee.

Mrs. Bailie's little son, Arcnie, was also the means of bringing people about the place. Great curiosity was created by the white baby, who was called "Okat" by the natives on account of his birthplace. The king often came to see him, and on one occasion carried him off to the town, where he was soon the centre of an admiring and excited crowd.

A mud church was now erected, and every possible means was employed to persuade the natives to attend. About this time the little progress made seemed lost through trouble between the Impok people and the Government. Despite repeated warnings, the natives of that town offered a human sacrifice. Mr. Kirk, who was in charge of Okat during Mr. Bailie's furlough, heard the sacrifice was to be made, and at once communicated with the District Commissioner at Eket, who arrived too late to prevent the offering. When he reached the town in company with the late Mr. Smith, manager of a coffee farm in the neighbourhood, he was attacked by the friends of the old chief, and the whole party chased.

An expedition arrived, Impok was burned, the

old chief made prisoner, and removed to Calabar, dying some time afterwards. The people professed to be in such a state about their king's imprisonment and death, that they said they could not think of going to church, and this excuse served them for a long time. When Mr. Bailie returned in 1897, he found them annoyed and sullen, and even more indifferent than ever.

The next two years proved a time of great testing to the faith of the workers, who, relying on God to give the increase, ceased not to cast the seed into the most unpromising soil. The conversion of such people is a double miracle ; not only has the Spirit to produce light in their dark hearts, but He must create spiritual organs of vision. His true servants, however, have learned in many fields that even this is not too hard for the Lord, and when Mr. Heaney came to assist at Okat, in 1898, he found several hopeful cases among Mr. Smith's workboys, to whom the missionaries had been in the habit of preaching.

Early in 1899, when Mr. Bailie was walking from the town with one of the lads, the latter testified— "I love the Lord Jesus, and have taken Him to be my Saviour." This simple confession brought a thrill of gladness to the missionary's heart, and the joy became greater when others expressed a wish to follow God. They were carefully instructed, and almost seven years after Mr. Bailie's first visit to Okat, he gratefully baptized

eight persons into the membership of the first Church founded in the Ibibio country.

From 1900, though there was no movement corresponding to that at Ibuno, there was no time without some seeking the Saviour. By 1902 the Communion Roll had grown to over 40, including several women, and men whose hands had been stained with blood. When Mr Bailie left for furlough in 1896, there were few to say good-bye and none to show sorrow. But when he and Mrs. Bailie came home in 1902, nearly all the towns in the district sent their chiefs as deputations to express regret, and to tender their desire for the speedy return of the missionaries; whilst a considerable crowd of neatly dressed natives, the members of the little Church, accompanied them to the beach, and with many expressions of love bade them farewell.

Mr. Bailie returned in 1903, accompanied by Miss Goff* a new worker, and the late Miss Gordon, who had joined the Mission in 1901. Mrs. Bailie had to remain a few months extra in Ireland on account of her two boys. Soon after Mr. Bailie's return he had a very severe illness. He suffered so much from spasms in the region of the heart that he prayed for death; and Mr. Bill, who was hurriedly summoned from Ibuno, after two or three days, thinking he could not possibly recover, sent to Etinan for Messrs. Kirk and Heaney.

* Miss Goff was married to the late Mr. Heaney in 1905, and with her two children now resides at Enniscorthy.

On the night before their arrival, the Okat Christians gathered into the Mission House, requesting that they might pray together for Mr. Bailie. Mr. Bill joined them, and all earnestly cried to God that even yet their teacher might be raised up. Their faith seemed to be honoured almost immediately, for the intense pain abated somewhat, and Mr. Bailie actually got several snatches of sleep. The symptoms returned during the following night, but he rallied, and gradually recovered.

When tidings reached Ibuno and Etinan that the crisis of his illness had passed, there was much rejoicing, as the Christians in both places had betaken themselves to prayer, that God might spare his life.

The work had now commenced to spread, and Mr. Bailie had to form separate classes for the inquirers at Awa and Ikoro-enang. In these and other towns in the Iman country, on the opposite side of Awa Creek, there were signs of awakening, and as many as eighteen were baptized at a single service at the end of 1903. The attendance, too, at Mrs. Bailie's class for women, started in 1897, and at the schools, became much steadier.

On the other hand the old customs proved too powerful for some of the young Christians across the creek, and the work there received a temporary check. This was especially true of Ikoro-akpan, one of the earliest towns in that new dis-

trict to appeal for the light. The young man, who was instrumental in beginning the work at this out-station, is now trading at Awa beach, about half an hour's row up the winding creek from Okat Mission House. He made a fine stand, and endured much persecution. Other young fellows mustered about him, and in a short time there was a good school, and a Church with over twenty members.

But, alas ! the fair prospects of this infant Church were destroyed by sin. The young man became ambitious, and desirous of making money. So

Ornamented Wooden Spoons, used by Ibibios.

he embarked in trade, and began to sell European gin. He also wished to lift up his head among the chiefs, and in order to do so married additional wives.

He still declared himself a Christian, and wished to remain in fellowship with the Church, and retain the friendship of the missionaries. He forgot that One had said—" Ye cannot serve God and mammon," and he failed. His fall involved others, until but two of the twenty are left walking in the narrow way. But the springs of this world fail to satisfy the soul that has tasted the

Photo by Mr. Westgarth.] SEEKING TO PROPITIATE THE EVIL SPIRITS.

living waters, and some of these backsliders in their misery are again turning to Christ.

If we knew more of the immoral currents of Ibibio life, we should wonder less at the fall of these boys. Besides the temptation to direct sin, young converts have often to face mysterious trials. Again and again, when a person has confessed Christ, he has been suddenly plunged into some sorrow. He becomes ill, or his children die. His heathen relatives try to convince him that all the trouble has arisen because he has forsaken Ju-Ju, and earnestly plead with him to appease the angry spirits by making a sacrifice. We rejoice that the vast majority of the native Christians hear these appeals in vain, and their affliction is often the means of drawing them nearer to God.

A very neat mud-and-wattle church, which lasted for nine years, was erected behind the Mission House in 1900. By 1906 the native Christians, who had increased to over 100, began to gather money for an iron building. In two years they were able to proceed with its erection, and a beautiful and comfortably seated church, accommodating over 300, now stands on the summit of the little hill which rises from the creek. On the occasion of its opening in 1909, there was a fine gathering—many coming in canoes from the other side.

In the same year, the work on that side (Iman)

made great advance. As the influence of the Gospel spread from town to town, it awakened a spirit of inquiry among the young, and out-stations were opened at Ikot-osong,* Inunoko, Efaha, Atiamkpat, Mbiuto, and other towns. Nearly eighty persons were baptized at a single service in 1909, and over 100 at another in 1911, bringing the total Church membership to nearly 500.

The work at Okat itself made slow progress, but it extended so rapidly in Iman that the Christians there were formed into a separate Church, which generally meets to celebrate the Lord's supper, at Atiamkpat, when there are congregations sometimes numbering over 1,200, mainly composed of young men.

Owing to the centre shifting in this way to the northern side of the creek, the old Okat Mission House was at the extreme end of the district, and the task of visiting the numerous schools in Iman, became too heavy for the missionaries. The white ants had attacked the house, and it was in a tumbledown condition from the ravages of other insects. It therefore became necessary to build a new station, and after very careful thought it was arranged to locate it in the Iman country. A site, by road four miles west of the river, was given and cleared by the people of Mbiuto. The schoolboys carried the entire

* Ikot, which signifies "forest," is a very common prefix in the names of places in the Ibibio country. The "t" is often softened into "r" especially when followed by a vowel.

material from the beach at Ikot-osong, free of cost, and a fine house was erected by Mr. Weeks in the first half of 1912.

This new centre commands the whole district. Roads run south towards Awa creek and the telegraph road to Opobo. Seven miles west of the Qua Iboe River a new road branches off this highway to Etinan. The country beyond contains numerous towns without a single out-station. Striking appeals have come from many of these as far distant as Essene. We hope the next extension will carry the Gospel into this region.

Having got the white man in their town, the Mbiuto Christians, who are few in number, and all young people, are most anxious to build an iron church. They raised some money from the ordinary offerings for this purpose in 1911 ; they are now supplementing this in every way they can think of. Obtaining permission from the chiefs, they gather palm-nuts, dry, crush and boil them to extract the oil, which is then sold and the total proceeds devoted to the building fund. Christian boys, who work as labourers for the missionary, have handed the half, and even the whole of the week's wages back towards the same object.

Thus the Gospel has proved itself the power of God among the Ibibios. The struggle was uphill, and every inch of the way was yielded only after a tough contest. But though the early years were

dark, and made many demands on the faith of the fighters, the issue was never in doubt, and the Cross has conquered many hearts.

There is still a work for the white missionary calling for great gifts of leadership, immense patience, and prayerful knowledge. Little communities of earnest but ignorant Christians, dwell in the midst of temptations, surrounded by a polluted and polluting atmosphere. One who can lead these to clearer conceptions of Christ's work, train their teachers, and make every Church member by life and lip a missionary, will now find a field for his service, to which no limit can be set.

Photo by Mr. Weeks.] UNLOADING MATERIAL FOR ETINAN CHURCH FROM THE MOTOR LAUNCH.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Sunday at Etinan.

The Lord wants reapers: oh, mount up,
  Before night comes, and says, "Too late!"
Stay not for taking scrip or cup,
  The Master hungers while ye wait.

The third station of the Mission is situated at Etinan, an important town in the heart of the Ibibio country, almost fifty miles from the coast. A stream rising in a large spring on the edge of the town runs through half a mile of jungle-covered swamp into the river. At high tide there is sufficient water in this little creek to float a canoe almost up to its source.

The bed of this creek was the only road from the waterside, till Mr. Kirk constructed a causeway of logs and earth to the deep water. Taking this road, we pass the houses of some Ibunos residing here for purposes of trade, ascend the slope of a plateau, about sixty feet in height, and forthwith find ourselves in a populous and typical Ibibio town. On the crest of the slope, and occupying a commanding position, stands the spacious Mission House, erected in 1909; and about half a mile further brings us to the iron church, thus far the most commodious in Qua Iboe, erected by

Mr. Kirk and his helpers, from funds raised by the natives, during 1912.

Before describing a Sunday at this interesting and busy centre, it will help us to take a glance backwards to the beginning of the work.

From the earliest days of the Mission the workers embraced opportunities of exploring the interior, and amongst other places, visited Etinan. When things at Okat were at a standstill, owing to the capture and death of the old king, Mr. Kirk made several trips further inland, and even preached in that town. The Christian Ibunos, too, by holding services on Sundays and by the example of their lives, influenced numbers of Ibibios, when trading in their towns.

In this way several natives of Etinan heard of Christ, and came all the way to Ibuno to beg for a missionary. Through lack of workers, more than a year elapsed before this request could be seriously considered. During that time scarcely a month passed without the appearance of these boys to urge afresh their claims for the Gospel. At length, after Mr. Kirk's return from furlough at the end of 1898, it was felt that something must be done. A visit was accordingly made to Etinan, which is best described in a letter written by Mr. Bill at the time :—

" There were evidences on every hand of the interest of the people in our coming. Ground had been cleared, and timber cut, for an intended

schoolhouse. From this a beautiful path, bordered by lemon grass, led to a house prepared for the expected teacher. The walls of this house were of mud, but straight and high. Very neat little frames, with hinged shutters, were fitted in, and the house was divided into two apartments—one for a bedroom and the other for a hall. In the former were placed a bed and a neat little table, both of native workmanship; and on the table were articles such as a mirror and a brush and comb, procured to suit the white man's idea of things. But the greatest wonder of all was a sliding skylight in the mat roof manipulated by means of cords, and which, when opened, flooded the room with light.

A Native Comb made of Wood.

"All these things spoke of the real desire of the people to have us, and of their willingness to help themselves to get a teacher We felt very thankful, and our hearts went up to God that this acted promise might be richly fulfilled in years to come. When we saw all that had been done, and heard again their oft-repeated invitation to come at once, we had not the heart to put them off any longer, so we promised that in a fortnight a white man should begin work"

At a meeting of the missionaries at Okat on the following day, it was arranged that Mr Kirk should open Etinan The steam launch, "Evangel," built in Belfast, arrived out just in time to

take the missionary and his belongings to this new sphere, on its maiden voyage.

Services and school were commenced, and within six months several young people were able to read. The desire for learning amounted to a passion, and was characteristic of Etinan from the first. In a short time the preaching of the Gospel reached many hearts, and the Saviour's love surely and swiftly attracted a number to Himself. These were instructed daily, and the first baptisms took place in February, 1900, when five lads and two girls made public profession of their faith.

The young people became greatly attached to the missionary, and spent most of their leisure about his house. The goodwill of others was gained through the dispensary, where crowds of ailing natives daily received treatment. But the majority of the Etinan people were indifferent. Many others were more or less hostile, and soon began to display resentment at the presence of the white man. For though numbers of the young were so earnest in their desire for the Gospel, Etinan was an evil town, wholly given to gin-drinking and idolatry, and the chiefs and witch-doctors openly and secretly withstood the work. They carried their opposition so far as to kill several who were in sympathy with the missionary.

At least two friendly natives—one of whom had given the site for Mr. Kirk's house—were

poisoned. The condition of Etinan at this time is indicated by the fact that men could always be found who were prepared to poison for payment; the sum generally received for removing a person in this way amounting to £5.

Mr. Kirk himself was in peril. Learning that an agreement had been made with the natives of another town to kill him, bands of Christian young men were in the habit of sleeping in the Mission House for his protection. Once in the middle of the night a number of strangers armed with rifles came about the premises. One of the young men, aware of their approach, challenged them. The would-be murderers thought the challenge came from soldiers, and imagining a Government force guarded the Mission Station, became alarmed, and dispersed.

The native teacher was compelled to fly, but Mr. Kirk remained at his post, and ceased not to preach Christ and Him crucified. The baptisms were a signal for more bitter persecution, which brought suffering to the Christians and inquirers, but could not stay the progress of the work. By the close of the second year the opposition began to wane, and at the end of the third, when the native Christians numbered sixty, it was a spent force.

Months of Mr. Kirk's time were occupied in procuring material for a permanent Mission House. During his absence the native teacher,

Stephen Equlo, who had accompanied him to Ireland in 1898, took very efficient charge of the work. Much of the success in the school was due to him, and he soon became a faithful and acceptable preacher. Equlo is a son of the late chief Eshet of Ibuno.

Despite difficulties and disappointments, often caused through illness, immense developments took place from 1902 onwards. From Etinan as a centre, schools were opened in all directions, and more than twenty now dot the country towards Uyo, Nsit, and Anang. These schools influence nearly forty towns. There are little companies of believers in connection with each, besides over 200 in Etinan itself, making nearly 600 professing Christians in the district.

The history of the out-stations would fill an entire chapter. We can only mention Afa-Offiong, one of eight in the Nsit country, where Joseph Ekandem labours. Joseph was a house boy in Etinan, and spent two years in the Institute. He bravely volunteered to re-open Afa-Offiong, after the suppression of the work there through persecution, in 1907, when two boys were killed, the former teacher chased, and the school demolished. For a year after Joseph's arrival there was an unbroken reign of terror, and the boys were in such dread, that as one of them said—"We had to steal to school all same as thief." Since 1909, although the town has been

the scene of much bloodshed, the work has not been openly interfered with, and we may hope that its influence will bring to an end the dark deeds which have rendered infamous the name of this town.

All the schools have been established through earnest appeals that have been coming in during the past eight years, with an insistence that has compelled the missionary, often with very poor material in the shape of native evangelists, to make some sort of response. The young people build a school, a house for the teacher, and often raise a little money. Then they appoint several of their number to journey to Etinan to press their claims on the bewildered white man, who, without a single suitable teacher, listens to the vain entreaties of a deputation almost every day.

The last Communion Sabbath we spent at Etinan was a memorable one. We get up early, for the first hour of daylight is the only hour of the twelve that can be called enjoyable by a European. As we crept from beneath the mosquito netting of our camp bed, the sounds of the singing of familiar tunes were borne on the fresh morning air through the open windows.

Just then Mr. Kirk entered the room, and when asked why there was so much singing at that early hour, he informed us it was customary for the Christians at Etinan to hold prayer meetings in different parts of the town on Sunday mornings ;

that many had come great distances to join in remembering the Lord's death ; some had stayed overnight in the homes of Christians ; and on this occasion the prayer meetings were even more numerous than usual.

We could not help recalling a Sabbath ten years previous, when the work was in its infancy. There were many noises then, but we heard no harmony. The town had many Ju-Ju houses, stocked with grinning idols. Its market-places and play-grounds were filled with crowds of nude and repulsive savages, engaged in buying and selling,

JU-JU IMAGES.

drinking and dancing, shouting and palaver. The old customs have by no means all vanished, but there are now Christians in every quarter of the widely-scattered town. Family worship has displaced idolatry in many homes, and the very air seems purified by the shining of the Sun of Righteousness.

We had our breakfast of porridge, tea, bread and butter, all of which come across the sea, reminding us of our dependence on the care

of our heavenly Father. By the time it is finished the road from the river is bright with brilliantly attired natives, on their way to church. Some are Ibunos trading at the beach, but the majority have crossed from the other side, where the schools planted from Etinan are advancing to meet those coming up from Okat. This is but one of a number of roads converging towards the centre of the town, and meeting at the church.

The service is to begin at 10 a.m. and there is little need for the bell to-day. When we enter the great building shortly after nine o'clock, it will hardly accommodate another person, and those outside are already ranging themselves two and three deep along the verandas. Entrance is gained by four doors, according to the direction from which the people approach. So there is no confusion, and a total absence of noise, as they quietly pass in, and reverently take their seats, the communicants forming a solid mass near the front.

A boy standing at each door counts those entering, and hands the totals, marked on slips of paper, to Equlo the native pastor, who informs us that no fewer than 1,268 are present. Of these not less than 800 are young men and boys, and the remainder nearly all young women, very few old people being seen. We cannot fail to be impressed with the demeanour of the congregation. The service lasts nearly two hours, the heat is

distressing, and the discomfort great ; yet there is scarcely a sound or movement until the Doxology is sung, when all bow their heads for a few moments, and then pass out with noiseless footsteps.

The silence throughout the entire service is very remarkable, and is only broken by the singing, the voice of the preacher, or the cry of an infant, which some Christian mother brings in her arms. All listen so as not to miss a word, and the eyes of the heathen are centred on the ranks of the Christians, as the bread and wine are served by the grave and decorous elders.

There is great hand-shaking, and giving of compliments, as the different groups and contingents part, before wending their way homewards. They are glad to escape the direct rays of the burning sun, as they leave the broad Government road, and seek the shelter of the narrow bush tracks, that lead right and left, to the towns from whence they came.

We return to the Mission House, and are scarcely seated for luncheon, when Mr. Kirk's boy informs him that he is wanted in the yard. We go out to find about twenty youths from a distant town, who have been at the service, and have come to beg a teacher before going away. There are two more similar interruptions before the meal is finished.

The third deputation consists of fifteen trimly-dressed boys, belonging to a town ten miles along

the Government road. We had called at this town on the way from Uyo a few days earlier, when the first house we entered struck us as being well built and neatly kept.* We asked the owner, a boy of about twenty, how he came to build a house, so much superior to the other huts in his town. For answer he stated that when visiting Etinan, he saw the houses of the native Christians, and had tried to make his house like theirs.

We inquired if he were a Christian, or if there were any followers of Christ in the town, and understood him to reply in the negative. Other boys came about, one of whom climbed a palm about as quickly as one of us could ascend a ladder, and we soon had a refreshing drink of cocoanut milk. When the boys learned that we were missionaries, they asked very eagerly if we were in a hurry, and when we answered —"No," they said—"Will you please come, we want to show you a thing?"

We followed them through a maze of bush tracks, past a native burying-place with curious objects on the graves, and two or three heathen temples, with open gable-shaped fronts—containing jars of sacred medicine, bones, and skulls—standing like outposts to protect the town from

* The grounds around this house were carefully cleared, and a little walk bordered with empty gin bottles—stuck into the earth neck down and bottom up—led from the town path to the door. The gin bottles here, and those lying about in other places showed that although the Gospel had not reached this town, large quantities of European gin had been consumed by the chiefs and people.

the dreaded spirits, till we came to a piece of ground cleared of bush, and surrounded by a fence. Entering the enclosure, we beheld before us a well-built church, which was " the thing " the boys wished to show us.

MEMORIAL TO DEAD CHIEF.

Inside we found everything complete. There was a single aisle with a row of seats on either side. Those near the front had ingeniously formed backs, which could be used to support slates or books. There was a small pulpit or platform of clay, surrounded by bamboo railing.

There was a rest for the Bible, made by driving a post into the ground, and fixing a short board horizontally on the top. We could see where the walls had been repaired, and parts of the roof rematted.

By this time fully thirty lads and a few girls were in the church. One of them came forward and said—"Two years pass by since we build this church. We keep it fixed and ready. We often go to Etinan to beg for someone to teach us, but no one has ever come. Oh, please, when you reach Etinan to-night, speak a little word to the white missionary. Beg him to send a man to tell us about God." The others sat scanning our faces with searching eyes to read the effect of this appeal.

We explained that Mr. Kirk had no available teacher,* but we said we should certainly tell him what we had seen, and of their desire for the Gospel, and that we should pray that it might please God to look in mercy on the work of their hands, and to raise up some one to teach them. Then another boy arose, and said they would be content with a very elementary kind of teacher, that they would gladly contribute towards his support, and that their chiefs were willing; concluding with a most touching appeal for us to have pity on them, and not pass them by.

* Some time afterwards Mr. Kirk was able to place a teacher in this town. Since then arrangements have been made by which one central school serves two or three towns in that district.

We came sadly away, the boys following us out to the Government road, some of them running alongside our bicycles, until at length we drew ahead, leaving them behind with their cries for a teacher ringing in our ears.

We often think of that little church, surrounded with emblems of the old worship, as symbolic of twentieth-century Africa. Though debased and enslaved by the cruel and crude customs of the age-long past, its children are stretching out their hands for something better. They are beseeching us for the bread of life ; and, alas ! through ignorance or want of thought, we are withholding it, or, at most, are giving them but the crumbs which fall from our tables. If we did more to relieve the needs of these hungering people, Christ and His Gospel would become more precious to ourselves ;

> " For meek Obedience, too, is Light,
> And following that is finding Him."

That Sunday afternoon, accompanied by Mr. Moyes, we cycled to Ekpenubom, about five miles north of Etinan, where we found nearly 300 gathered in the mud-and-wattle church. The resident native evangelist had not sufficient knowledge of English, so he preached at Afa-iman, and James Udoima, the teacher from that fine out-station, came and interpreted for us. We went to Ekpenubom by the Uyo Government road,

turning off to the left on a new road made by the schoolboys into their town. They cut this road with great labour through the bush, in the hope that the white missionary at Etinan could use his bicycle, and thus visit them more frequently.

After dinner, in the lamplight, we had a pleasant hour. Mr. Kirk had invited Equlo and his wife, and he had also gathered in the house-boys. We had Mr. Weeks, who was engaged on the new house, and Mr. Moyes, who was then superintending the out-stations. We had some talk over the day's work, and a little singing and prayer at family worship, before retiring for the night.

But the day's work was not yet over, for Mr. Kirk at any rate. Soon after midnight I was aroused by a low knocking at the Mission House door. Mr. Kirk was already awake and in quest of matches, which were not found without some trouble. Having got them, lighted a candle, and unfastened the door, we peered into the moonless night, where a strange sight met our sleepy eyes.

About twenty naked natives were squatting or sitting around a bamboo couch, on which the outline of an unconscious man could just be distinguished. It was what Mr. Kirk described as a cutting-up case, for the poor fellow had been severely handled in one of the fights that are so common from gin drinking and other causes in the country around Etinan. In such quarrels

the deadly machete is freely used, often with fatal results.

These people stated that they belonged to a town about seven miles away, that three others had made an unprovoked attack upon this man, and nearly killed him. There was no need for this last information, but Mr. Kirk was sceptical about the first part of their story, saying very likely "the other man" would soon arrive probably as badly cut up as this fellow.

His friends had tied him up with grass and plaintain leaves. As the rude bandages were

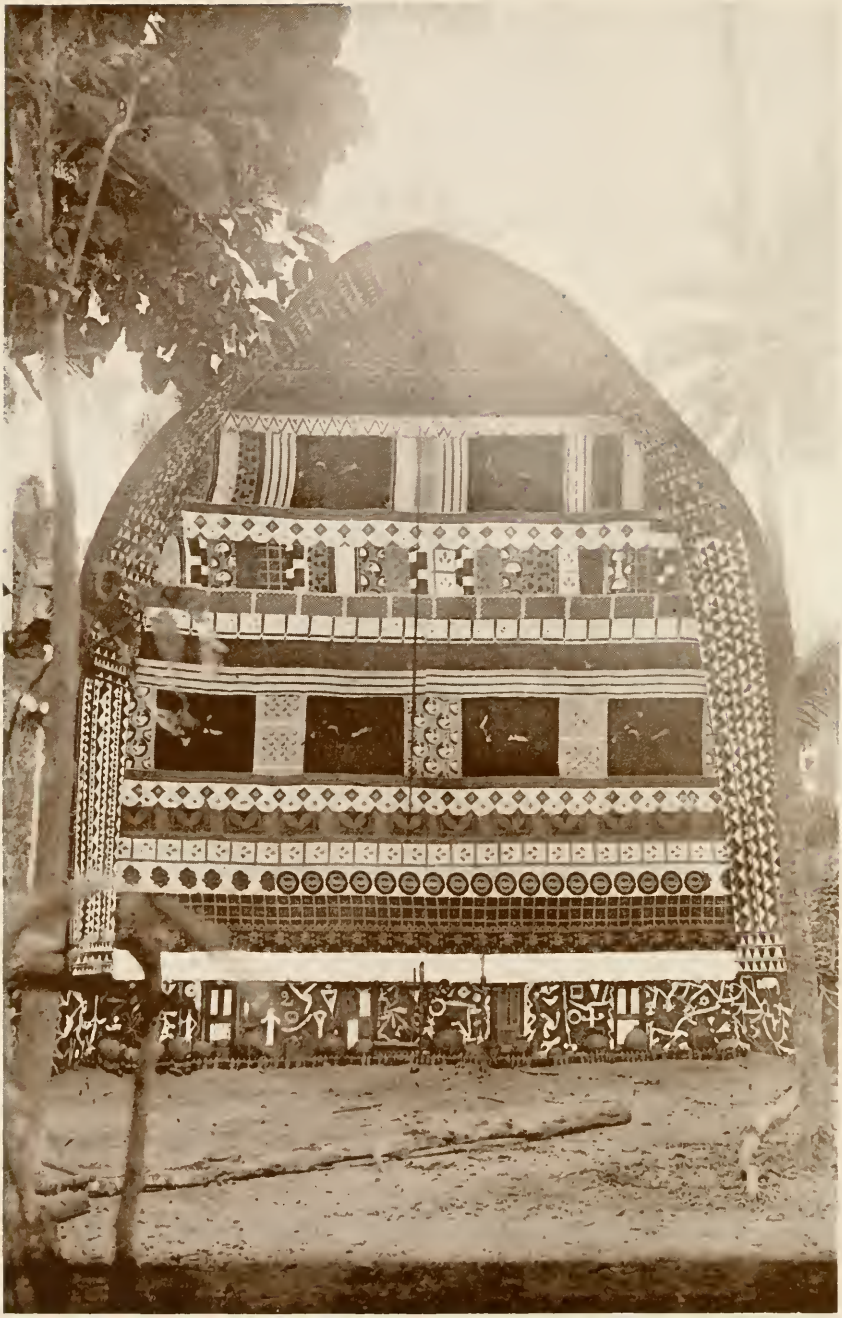
THE MACHETE.
Used by the Natives for clearing Ground, cutting Trees and numerous other Purposes.

removed, we beheld a shocking spectacle. It was simply marvellous that the man had not bled to death. Besides severe wounds on the legs and arms, his assailant had sought to give him the *coup-de-grace* in the left side, where there was a gash over a foot long, just underneath his heart. As it cut clean through the ribs, it would have instantly finished the man if it had been an inch higher.

The appearance of this wound, and the distressing condition produced by breathing are best left undescribed. But I shall never forget the

scene. In the centre was the prostrate form, and beside him the white missionary, with his face unnaturally pale and bedewed with perspiration, working as though his own life depended on every stitch. The man's three wives and his other friends, with dusky countenances and an inscrutable look in their eyes, squatted around, making for the picture a kind of frame, which seemed placed against a wall of darkness, for our struggling light revealed nothing beyond. In two hours, Mr. Kirk had completed his heavy task, and was rewarded by the man uttering a feeble moan, and then faintly saying, " mong, mong " (water).

The toughness of the Negro's vitality asserted itself in this as in many another case. There was very little fever on the following day, and before night the patient was actually able to sit upright. On the third day his people removed him to another part of Etinan, alleging with curious logic, that a spirit in the Mission House prevented his recovery! Notwithstanding the want of regular dressing for his wounds, he was well and about in less than three weeks. We afterwards learned that the fight was caused by drink, and that two were killed and several wounded, but none of the others were brought to the Mission House.



MEMORIAL TO DEAD CHIEF OF THE EKONG SOCIETY.

CHAPTER IX.

The Opening of Enen.

"In the simple story of the primitive mission, as recorded in the thirteenth of Acts, we see how every step in the enterprise was originated and directed by the presiding Spirit."

Enen is the name of a town and district on the left bank of the Qua Iboe River, about twenty-five miles above Etinan. The station, which was opened early in 1909, is not actually in the town, but in a village called Ikot-Idung, about four miles inland and north of Enen.

Up till three years ago the only route to this district was by the river, but the Government has now made roads from Etinan and Uyo, linking Enen with the other highways which have been recently constructed, and reducing the journey from Etinan, from the greater part of two days by canoe, to a few hours by bicycle.

From Enen to Etinan, the river flows swiftly with many curves, and an average width of fifty yards. Near the latter town the bush recedes somewhat from the water's edge, but occasionally two gigantic trees bow and almost touch across the stream.

Many beaches frequented by Bonny, Opobo

(called *Omany** by the natives) and Ibuno traders, are passed. Fronted by the water, and backed by high bush, these beaches are evil-smelling and oppressively hot. There is great bustle in the busy palm-oil season, but as a rule the crowd of naked retainers and semi-slaves belonging to each trading family, loll about in a listless and lazy fashion. The beach is strewn with pots and drums of oil, heaps of kernels, and bundles of fibre, whilst the air is permeated with the stench of half-cured fish and steeping cassava. Hidden in the jungle at a short distance to the rear, is a large Ibibio town, the natives of which collect and carry the oil and produce to the middlemen.

Many canoes, of great carrying capacity, measured in puncheons, all loaded to the brim, are met and passed. Dull-faced paddlers, whose bodies by their colour might have been moulded from the mud, propel them with easy mechanical motion down the stream. Up river, where the current is strong, the paddles are discarded, and the canoe is painfully poled along the very edge. The river twists so much that only a short stretch ahead can be seen, whilst behind, it rapidly disappears round a corner.

Enen is like the other beaches, only more extensive. It is occupied by a Bonny trader, Moses Wariboo, a professing Christian, who has shown much kindness to our missionary.

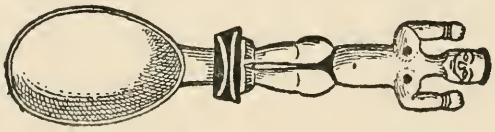
The workers in Qua Iboe thought of this place

* Efik, *Umani.*

as a likely centre for a new station almost since Etinan was opened. The late Mr. Heaney visited the town in 1907, and was welcomed by the local head chief or king, who extended an invitation to the Mission The demands of the work down river made it impossible to respond to this invitation until 1908, when Mr. R. W. Smith, who, with Mr. Westgarth, joined the Mission from the Bible Training Institute, Glasgow, in June, 1906, was set free for fresh work. On reaching Enen his reception by the old king, who gave ground for a house and school, was kindly enough, but the under chiefs exhibited little friendship. Soon after arriving Mr. Smith had severe fever, and as his furlough was due, it was thought advisable he should come home.

After a few months in this country, he again reached Enen early in January, 1909. Then his troubles began. While he lived in a diminutive house at the beach belonging to Wariboo, boys from several towns began to gather material for a school. Then Mr. Smith found the ground given him by the old king had been littered with thousands of broken gin bottles. On inquiring about this, he learned that a number of the other chiefs were determined that he should not settle in their midst. They threatened the head chief for giving the site, and vowed they would not allow persons from other towns to attend a church or school, if one were built.

It is necessary to explain that Enen was at this time ostensibly friendly to the Government. Its chiefs had long previously concluded a treaty, and accepted the conditions imposed by the District Commissioner. But though they kept up the appearance of friendship, they had never observed these conditions. They secretly traded in slaves, and they smuggled arms through to the hostile and unsettled district, known as Anang, above their town. Now they felt if a white man should reside amongst them, he would be sure to detect and report their deceit.



A Native Spoon adorned with Ju-Ju Image.

On the other hand the old king seemed to have the real interests of his people at heart, and had hoped that the presence of the missionary would act as a check on the other chiefs. Anxious for Mr. Smith to remain, he said he would make them pick the broken glass out of the ground, and that he would see that liberty was given for any to come to school who desired to do so. But the chiefs became more menacing and obstinate in their opposition, and Mr. Smith feared that the friction between the two parties would soon break out into fighting.

He made it plain to the old king, that if his staying at Enen should cause trouble, he could do no good. Meantime he daily sought help and guidance at the throne of grace. And just when the outlook became most clouded, a deputation appeared from the town of Ikot-Idung, begging Mr. Smith to come to that place. This town is within the area then hostile to the British Government; but after earnestly seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit, and consulting with the king of Enen, Mr. Smith went to see it. The principal people were all at Azumini, nearly twenty miles away. Boys were despatched for them, and without waiting for food they returned next day, hungry and fatigued, three of them coming to Mr. Smith's little house at the beach that very night.

When he went back the following day, the chiefs from the surrounding towns were assembled, and unanimously expressed the desire that he should come into their country. The head chief, Eti-beng, made a great speech, concluding by stating that they had heard Mr. Smith was a good man. If so, it was well, but if it turned out that he was a bad man, they would say, "Stranger, you must leave our town." He then offered a splendid site for a house, and when Mr. Smith told them of the difficulty of bringing building material and stores so far from the river, they replied, "plenty man help."

Asked when they wished him to come, they all answered, " at once." Next morning at daybreak over fifty of them came to the beach and carried his furniture and stores to Ikot-Idung. In three days they had erected a mud-and-wattle house for Mr. Smith to live in, pending the building of a permanent station.

Many came to see him on the afternoon of his arrival, and in the evening several boys inquired about a school. Mr. Smith told them that he hoped to open a school soon. They seemed very eager, and then Mr. Smith learned that during his furlough, these young people had actually built a school in the town.* They had heard that the missionary was likely to have trouble at Enen, and in the hope that he could be induced to come to them, they had prepared the way by erecting a school.

Using the lid of his tool-box for a blackboard, mounted on an improvised easel of bamboos, Mr. Smith commenced that very night, going to bed

* At a meeting early in 1912, Mr. Smith invited the Christians to give personal instances of answers to prayer. The following testimony, as translated by the native teacher, shows how some of the young people in Ikot-Idung were looking for the Gospel for years before the Missionary's arrival.

" It is a very wonderful thing to see how God by His kindness sending us a great gift, that is His Word. All of you know that Missionary did not come into our town at first. We have been long very much to have a man come and teach us the way of God. As we were thinking what to do, one of Christian came and told us to pray to God. So we did. After a while we heard that Etubom (Mr. Smith) is going to Enen to stayed there, and indeed some of us made up our minds that we should go and stay with him. We went there to see him. He

with a headache after trying to teach thirty boys, who had never seen between the covers of a book, the names of the letters of the alphabet. In a few weeks the attendance had increased to eighty, and over 100 came to the services held every Sunday. The hearts of these savage people were evidently prepared for the Gospel, and the missionary gained their confidence from the very outset. This was shown by the fact that girls attended school, women came to church, natives were constantly about the Mission House, and many sick were brought to the dispensary every morning.

The whole experience of our missionaries testifies to the leadership of the Lord Jesus. The closing of the door in Enen itself might have been a serious matter, if He had not opened Ikot-Idung. This is no solitary instance of the interposition of the Holy Spirit through the medium of circumstances, to hinder advance in one direction that He might guide forward in another. The restraint of the Spirit is fully as important as His leading,

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has been tell us to bring some sticks to help build the school, and the ground has been clear over there. How very glad we were. Very sooner the place was covered by some dust (*glass*) and the chiefs have made law that no one should built the school there. Etubom say if our chiefs agree he willing come and stay in their town. We brought the news back gladly, and the chiefs received the news gladly, and sent us to go and take Etubom here. Therefore all of us know how God answered our prayer and brought Etubom here. If we had to trust Idiong or some other gods we would not have got a white man in our town to teach us how we should worshipped God. Therefore I beg you very much to trust God as your Saviour. Oh, my friends! what hinder you not to trust God who can answers your prayers?"

and many chapters of failure in Christian work might never be written if all our plans and programmes were tested by prayerfully seeking the mind of the Spirit.

The materials for the new house, the cost of which was contributed by the Arthington Trustees, Leeds, arrived on the river in March. The house weighed many tons, and Mr. Smith had to face the problem of bringing it from Eket to Enen, fifty miles by water, and then through the bush to his town. As the Mission launch was out of order, and he had neither canoe or boat, it would have been difficult for him to get the material up, but for the kindness of Wariboo. He lent his large canoes, and provided boys, only charging their bare wages. When the material reached Enen beach, the people of Ikot-Idung, and several other towns, though it was their planting time, carried it to the site which Mr. Smith had prepared. It made 1,000 human loads, yet it was all carried in three weeks, and the natives refused to take any payment, except a few trifling presents.

Mr. Smith was now very busy. He had sick folk from 6 a.m. till 8 o'clock daily ; he had school every evening, and the day was filled with visiting, and working at the site of his new house. The ground was full of roots, some of them running beneath the surface for several yards, with many others branching from them and terminating in great pot-shaped lumps. There was many a tough

struggle to get these out, and many a night the missionary sat down to his lonely meal with tired arms and aching muscles.

He had the site cleared and levelled, the concrete foundations made, and the first uprights in position, when a Government expedition came to the town. The Anang district had got into a very bad state. Those committing crimes in the vicinity had only to escape into this region to find shelter from arrest. Government officials endeavouring to catch them were murdered. So a punitive expedition entered the country, burning the towns and killing many natives. When it reached Ikot-Idung, Mr. Smith appealed to the officers to spare the town, saying that whatever the people had done in the past, they had behaved well since he settled in their midst. He guaranteed that they would not molest carriers, passing through after the regular force, and that they would sell provisions for the native soldiers. On these conditions the officers agreed to leave out Ikot-Idung, and the rattle of the maxim gun was soon heard in a neighbouring town. Mr. Smith immediately informed the chiefs on what terms their town had escaped, impressing on them the necessity of keeping control of their young men. They warmly approved of what had been done, and the agreement was strictly observed.

The leaders of the expedition soon discovered that the professedly friendly town of Enen was

behind much of the trouble, with the result that it was destroyed, a number of the principal men killed, and a heavy penalty exacted. In this way the town that had rejected the missionary suffered, whilst the people that welcomed him escaped. The natives of the whole country were not slow to see this, and Mr. Smith's prestige became great.

In the bush-fighting innocent natives were killed, and the expedition might have been conducted with greater discretion, but the people received a lesson. Their country now became quiet. Roads were made in several directions, and Anang was constituted a new Government district, with headquarters at Abak.

Part of Carving on large Idol Temple near Enen.

Besides saving Ikot-Idung, Mr. Smith treated numbers of wounded brought in from other towns. His kindness was greatly appreciated by all the people, who loaded him with presents of yams and fowls, and expressed gratitude by every means in their power. The attendance at the church soon mounted to over 200, and it became evident that a larger building was required.

The chief gave a fine site, with permission to cut down some palm trees which were in the way.

Photo by Mr. Westgarth.] MAKING PALM-LEAF MATS FOR ROOF OF NATIVE-BUILT CHURCH.

It was close to several Ju-Ju houses, and Mr. Smith had great difficulty felling the trees without demolishing these. Inwardly praying, he carefully cut each tree, until with great thankfulness he saw the last lying fully ten feet away from the nearest heathen temple. Over 160 men and boys from eleven towns helped to build the church, which was finished in December, 1909.

The people made over 500 mats for the roof. Many of these not being required were sold and the money added to the offerings. The chiefs in an adjacent town had never shown any interest in the work up till this time, so Mr. Smith went over and requested permission to cut some timber for the new church. They not only agreed, but came out and helped in the work, the principal chief bustling about, and selecting the straightest and best trees.

During all this time Mr. Smith was also working at his own house. This building was a wonder to many who had never seen a piece of iron larger than a native hoe or spear head. They were greatly interested in the use of the spirit-level and plumb line. When they saw sand from the bed of the creek mixed with cement from across the sea, turning, as they said, "into stone," it was as magic in their eyes. The missionary explained everything to Eti-beng, who then conducted personal tours around the house daily.

At this stage Mr. Thomson, who had joined the

Mission from the Bible Training Institute, Glasgow, arrived at Enen. He helped to scrape and paint the steel framework, and the house was sufficiently advanced for Mr. Smith to take up his residence in two of the rooms in October. After that nearly 100 tons of earth had to be rammed in to raise the floors before being cemented.

At the beginning of 1910 several young men who were able to read were seeking baptism. They were in close and daily contact with the missionary, assisting him in making doors and window frames for the church. He had instructed them to use the saw and plane, and to handle other carpenter's tools. He also taught the young men to make decent roads to replace the narrow bush tracks all around their town. Many roads eight feet in width were constructed, swamps were filled in, and a bridge laid across the creek in front of the Mission House. This furnished a way for the natives in the north-west to come to church and school.

The work steadily advanced, and before the end of the year Mr. Smith baptised eight persons, all of whom were able to read the Efik Testament. Prior to baptism, he brought each into his house on successive nights, and explained the meaning and importance of the step to be taken. He pointed out that persecution and enmity from parents and friends might follow, and at the same time told them how wise they were in accepting

Christ as their Saviour, commending them to His protection and love.

Referring to these interviews, Mr. Smith writes ; " The seventh boy was a very quaint fellow. On my asking, ' Do you wish to become a Christian ? ' —meaning, of course, had he given up all his heathen customs—he answered like a flash, ' That is a foolish question to ask me, Master.'

" I was surprised, and inquired what he meant. ' Well,' he replied, ' you come here and tell us of our sin, and that unless we believe in Christ we shall never see God's country.' I said, ' That is quite true.' He then shrugged his shoulders, as if to say, ' Well, where is your sense ?' Then I saw what he meant. To him the only sensible thing for a man and woman, the moment they heard of God's wonderful offer of salvation, was to accept it. It was a glorious thing to enter God's country some day, and who could be so foolish as to reject the offer ?"

It gave the missionary great joy to baptise these young converts. They were as the vanguard of a great army, which the eye of faith could behold coming out of the Anang country into the kingdom of God.

At the close of the year he was able to report— " The Church attendance book shows that we had 216 present on the first Sabbath of 1910. Last Sunday no fewer than 512 were at church. The beginning of the year saw young fellows going

with their drums on Sabbaths to play. The end of the year witnessed a few young men with their Bibles proceeding to an adjacent town to tell out the good tidings. At the beginning of 1910, many naked girls and women were at market on Sunday, now numbers of these attend church, neatly dressed, singing the praises of God."

Early in 1911 Mr. Smith had completed the greater part of the building of the Mission House, church, and a small hospital, and had more time to see the surrounding country. Led by a very intelligent man, a member of the Idiong Society, people came regularly to church from a town called Ibesit, which Mr. Smith found to be more than four miles away. When he visited this town, the people offered to build a school, and earnestly begged for a teacher, so a site was marked out, and a school erected.

Leaving Mr. Hobbs in charge of the station, he came home on furlough in May. He was married to Miss Campbell, of Plumstead, who had been teaching under the London County Council, and both sailed for Qua Iboe in January, 1912, receiving a warm welcome on reaching Ikot-Idung. The white woman was a great attraction to the natives, who thronged every room in the house for over a week. Mrs. Smith soon found an outlet for her services in the school, and in teaching boys in preparation for evangelists.

The work is now taking firm root at the centre,

and its influence is spreading to distant towns. An out-station has been opened at Ikot-nko-isong, across the Qua Iboe River, nearly ten miles from Ikot-Idung, among a people noted for savagery and superstition. Having erected a school, they besought Mr. Smith to send a teacher. He was able to respond, and when he and his wife spent a Sunday at the place, there were over 200 at the church, though many were actually too frightened to come inside. They begged the missionaries to remain with them always, and were greatly pleased when they promised to come back soon. A second out-station has been established at Utu-nsek, and a third at Ndut, four miles north of Ikot-Idung.

Frank, the native teacher, has been a valuable helper in all the work at Enen. During the time Mr. Smith was engaged in house-building and visiting, he diligently taught in the school, where his work has been greatly appreciated by the young people.

In April Mrs. Smith wrote—"Last Sunday we had a baptismal and Communion service. Sixteen people received baptism ; of course, there were far more candidates, but the whole matter was well thought and prayed over, and we hope those kept back for various reasons, will be baptised next time. Amongst the sixteen was an elderly woman who was very keen. Her face beamed with joy. There were also two sons of Eti-beng, our head

chief. We thank God for these, and for their influence in that dark compound, and we shall not cease praying for old Eti-beng himself."

Every opening occupied in Qua Iboe has proved but the gateway to further extension. This is likely to be more than usually true in regard to Enen.

There is an immense number of villages to the west, between the river and the Azumini creek. A still more populous district, inhabited by Okonis, calling loudly for a central station, lies between Ikot-ekpene and Aba. This region was visited by Messrs. Westgarth and Hobbs in 1911.

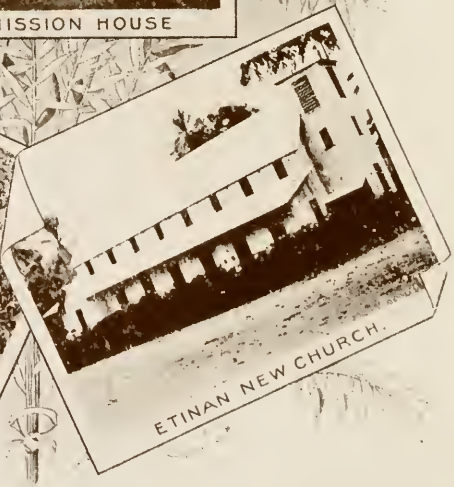
When it is entered, the next step will carry us into the Ungwa country, west of Bendi. A railway from the Niger to the Cross river, passing above Bendi, is only a question of time. If we wait for its construction we shall be too late, as the railway will furnish an avenue for Mohammedan traders from the Niger to pour into the region north of Qua Iboe. And every Mohammedan trader is a Mohammedan missionary.

ERECTING IKOTOBO MISSION HOUSE.

ARTHINGTON HOUSE ENEN.

ETINAN MISSION HOUSE

AKA NEW CHURCH FRAMEWORK



ETINAN NEW CHURCH.

CHAPTER X.

Extension Eastwards and the Call of To-Day.

> Let no man think that sudden in a minute
> All is accomplished and the work is done:
> Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it,
> Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun.

The preceding chapters contain sketches of the work along the river. The extension towards the east, resulting in the establishment of overland stations at Ikotobo and Aka, the Schools, the Mission Press, and the Medical Department have now to receive brief notice.

The story of the opening of Ikotobo in 1904, and of Aka in 1909, is very similar to that already told in regard to Enen. Ever since the Ekets became settled, the thoughts of the missionaries were turned to the districts beyond them, occupied by the Obium and Nsit people.

When Mr. Bill was in the Eket country vaccinating the natives, at the request of the Government, after the smallpox epidemic, in 1902, he visited Efoi, the principal town, and was well received by the head chief, from whom an appeal for a teacher had already reached the Ibuno Mission House. It was impossible to send a white man, but David Ekong, Abasi Mfon, John Ewainan, and

others visited the place at intervals, and remained for short periods.

This chief became involved in trouble with the Government, and Efoi and other towns were burned. Just before this, and while exploring for a waterway, Messrs Bill and Heaney found themselves amongst the Obiums, and were impressed with the superior roads and fine appearance of the country, compared with the swamps surrounding Efoi.

This induced Mr. Heaney to visit Ikotobo, where the people seemed eager for a teacher. As the greater part of the Eket country could be evangelized by native workers from Ibuno, and as the Obium tribe, with its fifty towns, offered a wider field for a central station, it was decided to make a beginning at Ikotobo. Accordingly Mr. Heaney moved there in January, 1904.

At that time the way to Ikotobo lay up the Obium creek by canoe, and thence across country. This creek had been blocked by the natives, who threw trees into the channel, imagining in this way to prevent the Government forces entering their country. An expedition came overland, the Obiums were defeated, and came to terms. This happened previous to Mr. Heaney's arrival, and soon afterwards, the Government made a road from Oron on the Calabar, through Ikotobo, to Eket on the Qua Iboe River.

Ikotobo is situated at the point from which

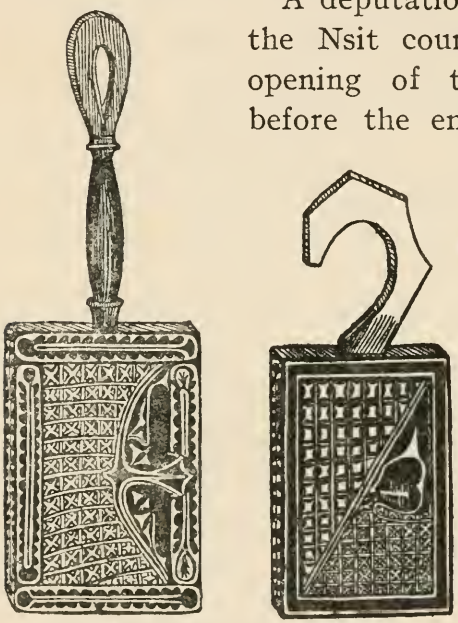
another road strikes northward through the Obium and Nsit countries. These roads touch many towns, and as a centre, Ikotobo is therefore unrivalled. It forms a splendid base for the formation of chains of out-stations, until connections are established with the operations emanating from Aka, twenty-five miles due north, and Etinan, twenty miles to the north-west.

Mr. Heaney remained till May, 1905, when he reported eight inquirers. During his absence the place was left in charge of a native, who was unable to cope with the peculiar difficulties which often assail the work at a new centre, when it reaches a certain stage.

In these circumstances, Mr. Eakin, who had been located at Ibuno since his arrival in April, 1905, volunteered to go to Ikotobo. He met with much opposition from the ruling men The members of the secret societies put Ju-Ju on the paths leading to the church, with the object of intimidating the hearers. They also made "medicine" to kill the inquirers. At first the conditions were trying enough, but before the end of the year they had improved. Many came to the services, the inquirers increased, and several publicly renounced the worship of Ju-Ju.

Before leaving in 1907, Mr. Eakin was privileged to baptize sixteen disciples, and to see the building of a new and larger church almost finished. It was completed under the oversight

of Mr. Westgarth, who relieved Mr. Eakin during his furlough. The interior was whitened, and all exposed wood tarred or painted. Altogether it is one of the best designed, coolest, and most comfortable native buildings in Qua Iboe.



HAND MIRROR CASES.
Often presented to Girls at their Marriage.

A deputation from Ikorakput, in the Nsit country, resulted in the opening of the first out-station before the end of 1907. In the following year, Atabong was taken over. This place is now self-supporting, and the native Christians have been formed into a separate Church.

When Mr. and Mrs. Weeks were in charge during Mr. Eakin's furlough in 1910, the vitality of the Church life in Ikotobo was low, but many moving appeals reached them from towns between the Telegraph Road and the river. The people in some places not only built churches, but brought money towards the support of teachers. In one district visited by the missionaries, churches had been erected in two towns, and when Mr. Weeks

hinted that possibly *one* teacher might be forthcoming, the people straightway agreed to put up a new and larger church, at a point that would serve both places.

Having completed building operations in connection with the station after his return, Mr. Eakin made a tour of the whole tribe, and found ten towns waiting for evangelists. Under the pressure of this need he felt some action must be taken. He accordingly formed a special training class composed of his own house-boys, and eight other promising lads. Two of the latter were maintained by the people of Okon, where an out-station was already in existence. Others worked on the Government roads for six months to obtain money to support themselves. This practical scheme appears to be succeeding. Several teachers have been trained, and seven self-supporting out-stations have been opened since January, 1912.

Though there are many bright exceptions, the Christians in Ikotobo itself have not grown in grace as they have grown in numbers, and consequently there has been little revolution in the habits of the people. The spiritual condition of the Church members has deeply exercised the missionary, who, joined by a few earnest souls, has been much in prayer for a true revival.

We are grateful to think that recently there are indications that the ebb is passing. Money is

being raised for a new iron church, manifesting great self-denial on the part of the members. The prayer meetings are fairly attended. A sense of need, an earnest tone, and much intelligence mark the petitions of the Christians. There is genuine progress among the out-stations, and altogether 1912 promises to be the most fruitful year in the history of Ikotobo.

No sooner was the Government road opened between Ikotobo and Uyo, than the missionaries sought contact with the people through whose country it passes. It crosses three streams flowing towards the river from the east. The Obium creek, a few miles north of Ikotobo, is the largest of the three. Besides the main creek, there is a series of lateral rivulets and pools of still water, forming a swamp about a quarter of a mile wide. These bridgeless creeks are serious barriers to travelling, and even the smallest of them in this respect reproduces the features of a great African river. Improving as it enters higher country, the road runs through palm groves and farms until it enters a group of towns known as Aka-uffot, within a mile and a half of Uyo Government Station. This place was visited by Messrs. Bill and Kirk early in 1908, and by Messrs. Eakin and Weeks at the end of the year.

When I was in Qua Iboe in 1909 we journeyed up from Ikotobo, to call on the king of Aka, whom we found lying on the threshold of one of

his small huts feverish and uncommunicative. We gave him a double dose of Warburg's Tincture, took our departure to Ikot-utung, an Etinan outpost, where we slept for the night, and returned next morning to find him decidedly better.

During our interview, he stated that after meeting our brethren in December, he had decided to invite the Mission to Aka, had cleared a piece of ground, and had waited since for some one to come. He added that the people would build a school, and suggested we should send a man to show them how, when the planting season ended.

A month later a messenger arrived at Etinan to announce they were ready, and a native evangelist was despatched to Aka to direct the building operations. When the school was completed, no fewer than 100 of them came to Etinan to carry Mr. and Mrs. Westgarth's stores. All was deposited in the teacher's house at Ikot-utung, and Mr. Westgarth and his wife arrived the following day, residing there during the erection of a suitable house at Aka.

Before this house was ready Mrs. Westgarth, who had been unwell for several weeks, became seriously ill. Mr. Westgarth consulted Dr. Robertson, of the United Free Mission, at Itu, and called in the Government doctor, but she gradually sank and passed away, before entering on the work to which she had so eagerly looked forward. She was married in 1908, and had been in the

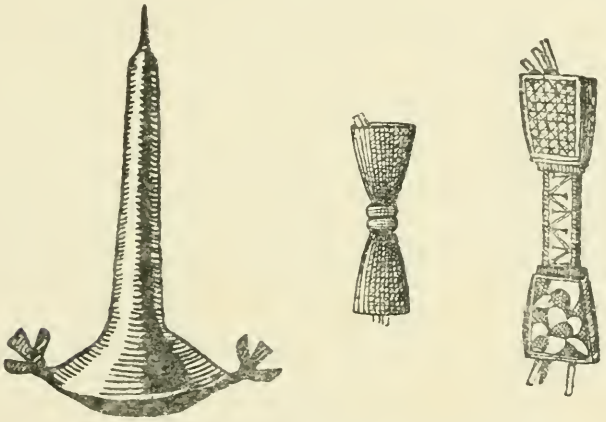
country only a few months. Her body was borne by native boys to Etinan churchyard, where it sleeps "until the Day break and the shadows flee away." Her death, the only one among our workers that has actually taken place in Qua Iboe, was rendered doubly trying to her husband, for the mails which arrived on the morning of her interment brought tidings of his mother's death at home.

Mr. Westgarth removed to Aka in September. The attitude of the young people, and their eagerness to learn, made the task of teaching a congenial one. Both school and church were well attended. Deputations soon came from other towns, imploring the missionary to send teachers. Before the end of the year an out-station was opened at Abiaka-itam, four miles distant, where the progress bids fair to surpass Aka itself. There are now three other out-stations, all supporting their own teachers. Numbers are inquiring the way of salvation, and sixteen have made public profession of faith.

The chiefs welcomed the white man, but when they perceived that the progress of the Gospel meant the overthrow of the old customs, their attitude changed. The Egbo Society showed its teeth during 1911, and attendances at the services and classes fell off. This opposition cannot permanently injure the work ; it will rather disclose how much of it is real.

Photo by Mr. Westgarth.] AN AKA NATIVE BOY.

The Christians and inquirers gave nobly of their money and labour towards a new church, with solid clay walls and an iron roof, which was finished on the eve of Mr. Westgarth's furlough in 1912. The clay was carried some distance, and moulded in the same way as concrete. There being no timber in the walls, this building should resist the white ants.



INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC USED IN NATIVE PLAYS.

Hollow Metal Instrument, from which Musical Sounds are obtained by beating the trumpet-shaped Mouth, is employed in Women's Plays.

Wooden Rattlers, carried in the hands of Native Dancers, and shaken at intervals to make Noise.

When Mr. Thomson, who relieved Mr. Westgarth, had to leave for Mbiuto, Aka was placed in charge of a native. This teacher, John King, is earnest and painstaking, but the responsibility is rather heavy for one so young. Mr. Needham, who was accepted from the Bible Training Insti-

tute in July, 1911, and who is at present assisting at Etinan, visits Aka regularly pending Mr. Westgarth's return.

The apparent tendency at Ikotobo and Aka for the work to extend before it deepens is almost inevitable, owing to the remarkable desire for the Gospel in the surrounding districts. At the same time it must always be the principal object of the missionaries to raise up a healthy native Church at the centre, for if the life is feeble there, it will be weak everywhere.

Educational Work.—We have only space for a bare reference to the numerous schools around each of the six central stations. The missionaries were led to open these schools through the desire of the natives for instruction, and because the total absence of education made it compulsory to teach the inquirers to read, to enable them to search and study God's Word. There can never be a truly spiritual Church if the members are ignorant of the Scriptures. The workers realise this, and very few are now baptized who are unable to read the Efik Testament.

These little schools are lacking in equipment, the native teachers are limited in knowledge, and in many cases ignorant of any method of teaching. Earnest perseverance on the part of the scholars compensates in some degree for these defects, and it is surely something that thousands

have been taught to read and write their own language.

The need for a central school to train native workers has already been mentioned. If we had a certified teacher on our staff, who could gather a number of the more earnest Christian lads and give them a complete course of instruction, we should not always have to turn a deaf ear to the bands of young men, who from all quarters come pleading for evangelists. A Belfast friend has offered to provide the allowance for a teacher, if one can be secured. We consider this to be the most outstanding need that at present confronts the Mission. Readers of this book can help to make it known. We also trust they will think of the condition of the schools—all built by native boys—with their bare brown walls, mat roofs, and mud floors. Illustrated texts, coloured pictures and maps would help to relieve the monotonous aspect. And they are so greatly appreciated !

Our lady workers have proved less able to endure the climate than the men, with the result that special work among women and girls has not been steadily prosecuted. In 1907 Miss Clough, who had practical training in nursing and teaching before joining the Mission, in conjunction with the late Miss Gordon opened a small Institute for girls at Okat. Miss Clough continued this work until she was reluctantly compelled to sever her connection with Qua Iboe

through failure of health in 1909. Miss Wilson assumed charge of the Girls' Institute before her marriage to Mr. Weeks* in 1910, since which this branch of the work has been suspended.

Mission Press.—The printing department is supplementary to the school work. For fourteen years Efik books were obtained from the United Free Church Depot, at Calabar. When on furlough in 1900, Mr. Bill, by the courtesy of Messrs. Wm. Strain & Sons, attended their works, and acquired a knowledge of type-setting, printing, and bookbinding.

On his return he took out a small hand press and the necessary fittings. The first Efik book, a school primer, for which the type was set by Mrs. Bill, was printed in Qua Iboe in 1901. Other books followed, the Mission Board of the United Free Church granting permission to print from translations made by the Calabar missionaries.

When the plant was destroyed by fire in 1907, several friends promptly came to our help, and a fine new Demy folio press, a paper cutting machine, and a complete printing outfit, were the first articles despatched to Ibuno after the fire.

The output from this press, manipulated by hand, failed to keep pace with the growing demand for books from every part of Qua Iboe, and in 1911 Mr. Bill wrote that it would soon be desirable

* Both were connected with Thornton Heath Mission before going to Qua Iboe.

to procure a heavier machine, and that meantime the need for an oil engine to drive the one in use had become imperative.

Two or three weeks before this letter arrived, a gentleman who realises the importance of providing natives with literature in their own tongue, had called in the Mission Office stating that he felt led to do something towards increasing the number of books in the vernacular in Qua Iboe, and requested the Secretary to communicate with Mr. Bill for the purpose of finding what steps could be taken. The Secretary's letter *crossed* the one coming from Mr. Bill, and by the kindness of this friend a new Tangye engine of $2\frac{3}{4}$ horse-power was soon on the way out. Through the voluntary help of others, additional supplies of type were despatched, and the Mission Press, manned by five native boys, trained under Mr. Bill, is now fulfilling an important function towards the enlightenment of many in Qua Iboe.

Medical Work.—Although none of the workers in Qua Iboe are qualified, nearly all have had training in simple surgery and the use of medicine. From their first arrival in the country they have been compelled to exercise all their knowledge in the treatment of disease. In large numbers and from great distances suffering natives have come, or when too weak, have been carried, to every Mission House.

A dispensary stored with a range of suitable

drugs, is therefore an indispensable adjunct to each station. The natives flock to these medicine rooms, generally in the mornings, and the first hour of the day is usually a very busy one compounding medicine, dressing ulcers, bandaging wounds, and occasionally performing minor operations.

It is most interesting and sometimes amusing to hear and see the people describe their ailments. If the missionary fails to diagnose the disease, it is certainly not the fault of the patient, for he demonstrates the various symptoms in the most graphic manner by voice and gesture. But many are too far gone to speak at all, when the missionary can only listen to the entreaties of the relatives, and then express his inability to do anything. They go away bitterly disappointed, for they come with the most exaggerated ideas of the white man's skill and the power of his wonderful medicine. The older missionaries, especially Mr. and Mrs Bill have numerous midwifery cases—some of great difficulty. Many mothers have been saved from untimely death through their knowledge and skill.*

Most of the tropical diseases are known in Qua Iboe. Children suffer from malaria and its complications, often with fatal results. Few of the older people escape rheumatism, which is more prevalent in the wet season. There is

* Mrs. Bill and Mrs. Bailie had each a full course in maternity nursing before going to Qua Iboe.

rarely a home without a sick person, and there are many whose illness is hideous and incurable. The very existence of these creatures without care or treatment is a living death. Different types of cases predominate at different stations. At Ibuno the majority come with rheumatic and chest troubles ; at Okat the organs of digestion call for treatment ; and ulcers and wounds are most common at Etinan. Sleeping sickness, the latest scourge of Africa, has made its appearance near Ikotobo.*

Through the kindness of individuals at home, little hospitals, with accommodation for a few patients have been erected at several stations. But for many years the need of a medical missionary and a fully equipped central hospital has been heavily felt. If the hospital were erected at a convenient point, the workers at the different stations could send forward difficult cases for treatment. There is an immense field of use-

* From some notes supplied by Mr. Eakin, who assisted a Government doctor in investigating sleeping sickness, it appears that the first symptom is swelling in the glands of the neck, in which small organisms of great activity are found. The disease is known and feared, and there are many doctors among the natives whose sole occupation is the excision of the enlarged glands. Many go about with affected glands for years apparently healthy. But when the disease begins to exert itself, the victims suffer from night-fever, and pains in the head and neck, until the sleeping stage is reached, when death may be a matter of weeks or months. Sleeping sickness is not contagious, but the infection is conveyed by a blood-sucking insect (*glossina palpalis*) of the house-fly family, which is common in the wet season. The difficulty of stamping out the disease is serious owing to the habits of the people who go about semi-naked and frequently get bitten when at work on the farms.

fulness awaiting a Christian physician in Qua Iboe. We are perplexed that no response has been made to the numerous appeals in connection with this need. There are our own missionaries, miles away from the nearest Government doctors ; there are other white men ; and there are the natives. We cannot conceive a more attractive field for one whose talents are at the disposal of the Lord Jesus.

. . . . . .

By arrangement with the Primitive Methodist Mission* the sphere of our operations in Qua Iboe is bounded on the east by a line a few miles to the right of the Government Road from Ikotobo to Uyo. Between Uyo and Ikotekpene it is our aim to advance until a junction is effected with the outposts of the United Free Church from Itu and Use. But there are no limits to the north and north-west. The opening of a new station is loudly called for beyond Enen. There are other districts which are as yet only names to us, containing scores of towns without a missionary. Formerly these places were inaccessible to the Gospel. Now they are open to everything.

The appeal that led Mr. Bill to Ibuno in 1887 was faint when compared with the compelling call of to-day. Even fifteen years ago, nearly every town outside that tribe had its doors closed against the light. We then prayed for

* Working in the Oron country.

entrance to Okorotip, for admission to the Eket country, and for a way into the Ibibio villages near Okat. Now we hear of a single section of the interior, where six churches, still unoccupied, stand ready built. When our missionaries at the inland stations are on tour, the houses where they stay overnight are literally besieged by companies of young men whose anxiety for teachers is almost painful. God has taken us at our word, only His answer is so much greater than our prayers. How has it found us ?

" Up to the beginning of the last decade it was true that Missions led the way into new country. To our lasting shame that is no longer true. In recent years both the Government and trade have been advancing with startling rapidity. Into much of the new country we have not even attempted to follow. We have looked earnestly and longingly towards these people. We have prayed that God would give opportunity for advance, but I fear we have put limits to our faith, and regarded occupation as impracticable. We now follow the Government—if we do follow —' as snails after an express train.' "*

The construction of railways and roads accentuates the urgency of the situation. All is change and movement. The old conditions are passing. Every kind of false teaching and every form of sin will now have access to the ignorant Pagans of Southern Nigeria. The Moslems will reach

* Rev. A. W. Wilkie, Calabar.

them, and a godless civilization is already being carried amongst them by immoral Europeans.

Meanwhile the little churches are rotting in the rains without a messenger of the Cross to make known its story to those who built them, and who vainly watch through the voiceless seasons for the Word of Life. Yet we Christians, in this day of God's purpose and power, move with leaden steps, when our feet should be jubilant to do His bidding. and swift to make response more adequate to the needs of Africa and the world.

UTUM IDIKURÈKE KAÑA*

* Efik for "The work is not yet finished."

Constitution of the Mission.

CHARACTER.

When the Council was formed in 1891, the Constitution of the Qua Iboe Mission was framed on much the same lines as that of the China Inland. It is, therefore, Evangelical in character and Interdenominational in work

Although it has no official connection with any branch of the Church of Christ, it seeks to enlist the sympathy and fellowship of all Christians in endeavouring to perform the work committed to it in the providence of God.

SUPPORT.

Hence the Mission is entirely dependent on free-will gifts from those in sympathy with its work, and whilst looking to God for the supply of all needs, it circulates information in the hope that friends may be led to help.

POLICY.

The Council has always endeavoured to act on the principle, that the support of a missionary is as much the work of God as is His sending out ; and has, therefore, never refused to consider offers of service from suitable workers, even when there was not sufficient money in the treasury to defray the expenses of a passage to the Field.

MANAGEMENT.

The affairs of the Mission have been managed, and its finances administered with the greatest care and economy so that it has secured the confidence of all who have watched its work. No forward movement has been entered on without much prayer and thought, and only when the way seemed clearly indicated by the guidance of God.

OFFICE.

108, 109, SCOTTISH PROVIDENT BUILDINGS, BELFAST.

Ways of Helping.

If the necessary accelerated progress in the evangelization of the **one million souls** of Qua Iboe land is to be made, there must be a widening of the circle of helpers.

We appeal for your co-operation, and suggest the following ways in which you may help :—

1.—PRAYER.

Every forward step depends upon earnest prayer. You are invited to join in seeking increasing blessing on the work and workers.

2.—CONTRIBUTING.

By entering your name for an annual subscription, or by taking a collecting box, you may have a share in the evangelization of Qua Iboe. At present the sum of £10 is required every day to meet the needs of the work.

3.—AUXILIARIES.

If more organised help is to be given, it is suggested that you form an auxiliary, consisting of a number of subscribers and boxholders, who will unite in regular prayer and systematic giving.

4.—TELLING OTHERS.

Like No. 1, this is a way in which all may help. You may be able to give very little, but you may do something in arousing the interest of others by telling them of Qua Iboe and its needs.

5.—GOING.

All are not in a position to go, but there may be some whom the Lord is personally calling. If it is you, no time should be lost in placing yourself at His disposal and prayerfully seeking His guidance.

Further information will be furnished, and the QUARTERLY PAPER of the Mission will be despatched, if application is made to—

MR. R. L. M'KEOWN, General Secretary,
108-109, Scottish Provident Buildings, BELFAST.

Qua Iboe Mission ⟨West Africa⟩

MISSIONARIES :

Mr. S. A. Bill, Field Superintendent (1887).

Mrs. S. A. Bill (1891).
Mr. A. Bailie (1888).
Mrs. A. Bailie (1892).
Mr. John Kirk (1894).
Mr. W. C. W. Eakin (1905).
Mr. R. W. Smith (1906).
Mrs. R. W. Smith (1912).
Mr. J. W. Westgarth (1906).
Mr. G. K. Weeks (1907).
Mrs. G. K. Weeks (1908).
Mr. Josiah Hobbs (1908).
Mr. G. A. Thomson (1909).

Mr. Darwin Needham (1911).

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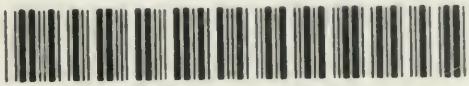

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